Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1997
ISSUE #65

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"Whether we listen with aloof amusement to the dreamlike mumbo jumbo of some red-eyed witch doctor of the congo, or read with cultivated rapture thin translations from the sonnets of the mystic Lao-tse; now and again crack the hard nutshell of an argument of Aquinas, or catch suddenly the shining meaning of a bizarre Eskimo fairy tale: it will be always the one shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with a challengingly persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told."
— Joseph Campbell
The Hero With a Thousand Faces

Tell us what's on your mind. Write to "Letters," DUNGEON® Adventures, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055. You can also send email to our new address: dungeon@wizards.com. Do not send change of address notices via email. Please send subscription questions and change of address notices to DUNGEON Adventures, *Subscriptions, P.O. Box 469106, Escondido, CA 92046-9106.*

Yasou

I am a reader of *DUNGEON Adventures* from Greece. I decided to write this letter for two reasons, first of all to congratulate Christopher Perkins on "Seeking Bloodsilver." *[Gee, thanks—Ed.]* I've just finished DMing it (in my regular AD&D® campaign, so it needed a few modifications), and it's by far the best I've ever seen in *DUNGEON Adventures*. The second reason was to send my opinion about the best adventures from issues 56–59, So: Issue 56: "The Land of Men With Tails," "Janx's Jinx." Issue 57: "The Murder of Maury Miller," "The Rose of Jumlat." Issue 58: "The Baron's Eyrie," "Challenge of Champions." Issue 59: "Seeking Bloodsilver," "Wedding Day."

Panagiotis Patlakas
Alexandroupolis
Greece

Chocolate Cake

Having an issue totally drawn by Tony DiTerlizzi was, in my opinion, a true work of art. He is truly the best modern TSR artist.

Although I do not use *Masque of the Red Death*, "Jigsaw" was still very enjoyable, at least to read. It's good to see the magazine doing adventures other than regular AD&D for a change.

"Storm Season" was even better. While I didn't get a chance to read the novel, this module introduces the ultimate monster. If a Night Parade creature can appear as almost anything, there are limitless opportunities in using them. Even after I run the module with my group, they certainly will not have seen the last of the Night Parade!

I have already run "To Save a Forest" with my group, and they enjoyed it. This is a vintage AD&D adventure—treants and unicorns, pegasi and nagas—it makes me remember the old days.

"Night Swarm," by far, was the best. Vampires are my favorite villains, and this one takes the triple-layer-chocolate cake. Lyman Frack reminds me of an old Spider-Man villain—I think his name was "Swarm" or something like that. Plus, this adventure really has the flavor of a RAVENLOFT® module, which my players always enjoy.

Thanks for a stupendous issue. Until next time, watch out for the thing in the swamp.

Brian Corvello
Phoenix, AZ

Neat-O!

Okay, you guys got a really cool magazine full of cool neat-o cheat-o adventures, but it is missing one thing, a campaign overlooked for a long time. This world was called the SPELLJAMMER® setting. What in the world happened to it? It was such a cool world. TSR has not made any new things for SPELLJAMMER. The last one I ever saw was the *Astromundi Cluster*. That was, like, three years ago! So I turned to *DUNGEON Adventures* for some SPELLJAMMER stuff. You guys don't have any either! What happened to the setting? Was it overthrown by the PLANESCAPE® campaign? destroyed by the BIRTHRIGHT® setting? To me, the BIRTHRIGHT and MYSTARA® settings are the most useless worlds I have ever seen. FORGOTTEN REALMS®, PLANESCAPE, and SPELLJAMMER settings were the best. Could you make some more SPELLJAMMER adventures? Pretty, pretty please? I swear that one day the SPELLJAMMER setting will return and be king of all TSR role-playing worlds.

Nicky Diak
Kalama, WA

We try to print a variety of scenarios in the pages of DUNGEON Adventures, *including world specific modules. We published "Gnome Droppings" back in issue #63—a short SPELLJAMMER adventure featuring autognomes. Other published SPELLJAMMER adventures include "The Sea of Sorrow" (Issue #36) and "An Artist's Errand" (Issue #45).*

Continued on page 70

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Taking Command

In her Issue #64 editorial, Michelle Vuckovich, then-editor of *Dungeon® Adventures*, took a friendly jab at me by commenting on the monstrous length of my published adventures. For that infraction, I have banished her from the gaming industry and usurped her job. Let that be a warning to others who make the same mistake.

All kidding aside, Michelle has left the company to pursue her Master's degree. Her friends and colleagues at TSR wish her great success.

Strange as it might seem, my qualifications as a writer are considerably less important than my experiences working with the previous editors of the magazine. I've had modules accepted and rejected by all of them. Each of these people has helped define what the role of the editor should be.

Roger Moore was our first editor. In fact, Roger created a lasting vision of what the magazine was meant to be—a vision unchanged in 12 years. He turned down my first submission to *Dungeon Adventures*, but he was good enough to enclose a short, tactful letter telling me what I'd done right, encouraging me to submit new material. From Roger I learned that the editor must ascertain the magazine's present needs, which in turn requires the ability to mete out rejections conscientiously.

Barbara Young became the second editor with Issue #9. During the unprecedented eight years helming *Dungeon*, Barbara taught me that through encouragement, an editor has the power to turn an undisciplined amateur writer into a competent, self-analyzing author.

Barbara Young said goodbye to the magazine in 1995, making way for Wolfgang Baur. As a writer and frequent contributor to *DUNGEON Adventures*, Wolf demonstrated that an editor must be sympathetic to the writing process and offer helpful suggestions rather than harsh criticisms, helping his writers put clever spins on old ideas.

Dave Gross took the reins with Issue #54. What I admire about Dave is that he never succumbs to a writer's ego. He judges every article, every adventure, on its own merit. He always demanded my best work without sounding like an ogre. Thanks to Dave, I view my work and the work of others with a far more critical eye, and I know that the editor must uphold standards and remain true to the magazine, true to the readers, and true to himself above all else.

Dave left *DUNGEON Adventures* to helm *DRAGON® Magazine*, making way for my predecessor. Michelle had a clear vision of what she wanted to see in *Dungeon Adventures*. She preferred articles with strong plot elements because she knew that every good adventure contains a good story. From Michelle, I have learned to seek out adventures with stories that capture the imagination.

Of course, Michelle is not the only member of our periodicals gang who's moved on. Lizz Baldwin has been lulled into TSR's book publishing department. She is replaced by Jesse Decker, our new Editorial Assistant, who will happily answer all of your queries provided you include an SASE! (His answers might be wrong, but you can't help but admire his effort.)

I should mention that as the editor, my job precludes me from writing new adventures for the magazine. But fret not—there are still plenty of Chris Perkins adventures in our inventory. Rather than deprive the readership by holding them back, we'll print these jewels in good time. Meanwhile, please don't think I'm taking over the entire magazine. I wouldn't do that.

Really.

A deluxe Chris Perkins issue would be a literary monument embraced by thousands of readers worldwide, but we'd never be able to surpass it!

Having said that, what could Chris Perkins possibly bring to the role of editor? Well, I believe it's the editor's professional responsibility to treat the magazine very seriously. In so doing, however, the editor must always remember to never take *himself* too seriously. In case you hadn't noticed, *that's* where my true skill lies.

Chris Perkins

Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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KNIGHT OF THE SCARLET SWORD

BY JEFF CROOK

The best of intentions

Artwork by Stephen A. Daniele
Cartography by Rob Lazzaretti

Jeff writes: "This adventure has been through five revisions and three editors, almost two years from conception to final publication. I can't think of anything else to say about it, except that I am glad it is finally done"

"Knight of the Scarlet Sword" is an AD&D® adventure for 5–7 PCs of levels 4–6 (about 28 total levels). It is recommended that a wizard and a lawful good warrior take part in the adventure. Because of the complexity of the interactions among the PCs, NPCs, and monsters, and the multiple possibilities of the plot, the DM should become intimately familiar with this adventure before attempting to play it.

The adventure is set in the community of Bechlaughter (BAY-law-ter) and its surrounding temperate hills, meadows, forests, and caves.

For the Players

The DM must design the adventure hook to suit his campaign. As an example, the PCs could have taken a wrong turn at a crossroads and found themselves in Bechlaughter, or they could be seeking Bechlaughter because they have heard that the village is ruled by an evil wizard.

Bechlaughter is the last outpost of civilization; it lies at the end of the road at the edge of a vast and unexplored wilderness. The following boxed text assumes the PCs have come by way of the road.

> The road has finally given out, its cobblestones vanished beneath a short springy turf, and the trees and weeds have almost reclaimed the way. Only a poor track remains, deeply rutted by wagon wheels, muddy in places, and broken in others by the roots of encroaching trees. Your path crosses a bubbling stream of clear water. An old stone bridge once crossed the water here, but it has long since washed away. Luckily, the stream is not too deep, and it is easily forded.
>
> On the other side of the stream leans a stone pillar carved with letters that have nearly weathered away. You can barely read the dire warning—"Beyond this Point, Dragons and Monsters Abide." Just ahead is a cluster of small, thatch-roofed houses and peasant's hovels.
>
> According to the wooden signpost erected at the edge of the village, this

place is called Bechlaughter. Several weird sights arrest your eyes. Most prominent is the large dome at the center of the village. It appears to be made of purest silver.

Near the dome is a long wooden house with a tall chimney and a thatched roof. Judging by the contingent of thickly-thewed constables loitering near the door—not to mention the large number of peasants gathered in the shadow of the house, selling everything from woolen garments to live sheep—this building could be either the sheriff's office or the town market. The overwhelming aroma of stale beer wafting from the door as you approach testifies to the building's true purpose. Four corpses dangle from a gallows built nearby. A garish scarlet tent stands in a field some distance from the noise and odors of the Long House.

If the PCs ask where they can acquire a room for the evening they are directed to the Long House. As strangers, the PCs quickly warrant the attention of the constables of Bechlaughter.

The constables note any PCs who look like wizards. As described in the "Laws of the Land" sidebar, magic is either illegal or taxable in Bechlaughter. The leader of the constables approaches the most likely mage; if no wizards are present, the most obvious leader of the party. Read or paraphrase the following:

The largest and burliest of the village constables places one hairy hand on your shoulder and says with rank breath, "Here now, you folks are strangers, so likely you'll not know we don't allow no illegal magic here in Bechlaughter." He is quickly backed up by eleven of his fellows. By their looks, all of them are seasoned warriors fully capable of using the heavy battle axes they carry. Two large, snarling war dogs fall in beside the constables and restlessly paw the ground as they watch your every move.

Their leader continues, "If any of you is a wizard, you'll have to sign a warrant declaring, upon pain of death, that you won't cast your spells inside the village nor against any of its citizens. If any of you carries magical weapons and such, you'll have to pay the fair tax on it same as everyone. If you go on to the Long House, you can pay your taxes to the Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg."

With a brisk slap on the back, he says, "Welcome to Bechlaughter!"

If the PCs refuse to comply with these laws, they face the wrath of the sheriffs and are thrown in jail (area **1H**). If they resist arrest, they soon discover that the constables are berserkers.

Berserkers (12): INT average; AL N(E); AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT see below; Dmg by weapon type; SA berserker frenzy; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20; XP 15; *MM*/196.

In battle, the constables drive themselves into a frenzy, during which they may either attack twice per round or attack once with a +2 bonus. They wear leather armor and wield battle axes. Each constable has 5–30 sp in his pouch. If the PCs defeat the constables, they are roundly cheered by the villagers. However, the Scarlet Knight (see area **2**) is not pleased.

The leader of the constables is named Gaub. He is always attended by two mastiffs named Grim and Fel. The dogs fight in concert with the berserkers or attack at Gaub's command.

War Dogs (2): INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 13, 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ M; ML 8; XP 65; *MM*/57.

Adventure Background

Much of the adventure centers around the silver dome and its occupants (both living and dead). If asked about the dome, the villagers remark that it was the home of the evil wizard Zaron, former Lord of Bechlaughter, before the coming of the Scarlet Knight. The Dome of the Mage was built by Zaron. He lived there for 30 years.

Although a thoroughly evil man, Zaron made only two laws—that everyone should pay their taxes on time and that no one should speak a word against him. Violators of these laws invariably vanished, and it is a common rumor that they were made into zombies to serve the wizard or were fed to monsters living in his dungeons. Neither of these rumors has been proven true.

About six months ago, Zaron felt that the time of his death was drawing near. He had long prepared for this. He locked himself up inside his dome, and he further sealed himself inside a *prismatic sphere*. Thus protected against outside intrusion, Zaron imbibed a potion that would transform him into a lich. As the adventure progresses, this horrid transformation moves toward completion.

DM Note: The process of becoming a lich described in this adventure differs greatly from the process described in the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*™ tome. The different processes developed by various alchemists and mages are as varied as imagination allows.

Meanwhile, Zaron's homonculous, Zeek, has been spying on the village so that it can report to Zaron when he awakens. The homonculous enters and leaves the Dome through a small secret door. However, Zaron's familiar, an imp named Paxzux, found this same door and escaped. Since that time, it has been plotting to further its own ambitions. (For information about the rivalry between the imp and the homonculous, see the "Paxzux and Zeek" sidebar.)

Not long after Zaron locked himself in his dome, a band of ruffians came along and began to rob and murder the villagers. Luckily, a warrior known as the Scarlet Knight happened by one day while searching for a peaceful place to pitch his tent and rest for a few days. The ruffians attacked him, and he routed the whole group single-handedly. The next morning, he found himself elected Lord of Bechlaughter, with the power to make laws, exact punishment, levy taxes, and appoint government officials.

He was a kind and fair lord for several months, but he had one prejudice against which he could not control his anger. He hated magic of any sort, especially wizard's magic, which he calls "black magic." Although he heard rumors of certain villagers practicing the dark arts, he could not in good conscience arrest, try, and convict anyone without sound evidence.

All this changed when he met a talking white goat in the forest north of town. The goat praised him for being just and righteous. For some hours, the two discussed principles of law and goodness, and everything the goat said seemed to make sense. By nightfall, the Scarlet Knight was convinced that no measure was too strict when enforcing the law. Several weeks later, the goat introduced him to a band of warriors who would serve well as constables (the berserkers above) and recommended that the blacksmith Corwyn Helg be appointed as mayor so that the Scarlet

Laws of the Land

The laws of Bechlaughter are posted at the door of the Long House for all to see, so ignorance cannot be used as a defense. The PCs may not be aware of the punishment for each law. More detailed descriptions of laws and taxes may be found in *The Castle Guide* sourcebook. In some cases, trial by combat is allowed, with the accused battling the Scarlet Knight to prove his innocence. Trial by combat need not be to the death. If the accused is unable to fight or is a mage of any kind, he may name a champion to take his place. Along these lines, the accused's champion may undertake some sort of good or holy quest instead of trial by combat.

❖ **Practicing black magic, casting spells within the village, casting spells on any citizen or animal.**

The Scarlet Knight shows no mercy. The accused is stripped of all lands, titles, and possessions. Then he is bound and gagged, jailed, and hanged. The accused is allowed no defense lest he cast a spell on the judge. The accused is allowed no witnesses for defense lest they be under some spell. Use of any magical item that duplicates a spell or spell effect is covered under this law. Exceptions—clerical magic is excluded from this law unless it is used for some evil purpose. Intent is decided by the Scarlet Knight. Trial by combat is allowed.

❖ **Murder, kidnapping, rape, arson, assault with a weapon.**

The Scarlet Knight judges these cases fairly, allowing the accused the full measure of defense, including witnesses. Self defense is an allowable defense in cases of murder and assault. Conviction is punishable by hanging. Trial by combat is allowed.

❖ **Rebellion, treason, espionage, and conspiracy.**

The Scarlet Knight judges these cases, but he never makes a decision without first consulting the imp. If the imp feels that its hold on the Scarlet Knight is threatened by the PCs, it may accuse them of one of these crimes. If the imp says the accused is guilty, the Scarlet Knight most often agrees. The accused is hanged. Trial by combat is allowed.

❖ **Burglary, theft, fighting, excessive drunkenness, resisting arrest.**

The Scarlet Knight may judge these matters, or he may turn this over to a council of six constables. Fighting is assumed to be with fists only; if any weapon is drawn, the matter becomes one of assault with a weapon. These crimes are punishable by fines, jail time, and/or lashes, the number and severity to be decided by the judge. In cases of theft, the accused is expected to return any stolen property. Any judgment by the constables may be appealed to the Scarlet Knight. Trial by combat is allowed.

❖ **Failure or refusal to pay taxes, breach of contract, debt, fraud, and forgery.**

Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg judges matters of tax and civil law. Punishments include seizure of properties, fines, jail time, and/or lashes. Any judgments by the Lord Mayor may be appealed to the Scarlet Knight.

The following taxes must be paid by everyone.

Due each Spring:

❖ **Farm tax:** one cp per acre farmed (not necessarily owned).

❖ **Land tax:** one sp per acre owned (cumulative with farm tax, if applicable).

❖ **Hearth tax:** building tax, varies according to structure.

Due each Fall:

❖ **Income tax:** assessed at 1%.

❖ **Animal tax:** varies according to animal, one sp for a horse, one cp for a mule or ox. This tax may also be due upon first entering Bechlaughter.

Due once per year (may be assessed upon entering Bechlaughter):

❖ **Weapon tax:** one sp for each weapon larger than a dagger, hunting weapons are excluded.

❖ **Magic tax:** one gp per 100 XP of value, per the *DMG*.

❖ **Adventurers tax:** assessed at 1% of treasure gained during the course of an adventure. May be cumulative with income tax.

Knight could devote his time exclusively to rooting out evil.

The goat is actually Zaron's imp Paxzux. Since his escape from the dome, he has pursued his love of spreading evil throughout the world. He delights in corrupting all that is good and has targeted the lawful good, but easily persuaded, Scarlet Knight.

Each night, the Scarlet Knight meets the imp (in goat form) in the woods at the north end of town to receive advice and suggestions about future actions. Using his innate power to cast a *suggestion* spell, the imp proposes only those ideas that the Knight finds acceptable and necessary if the law is to be upheld and evil punished. Most often, Paxzux suggests that some innocent man or woman is a practitioner of black magic—a crime punishable by hanging. At other times, he suggests that someone should be given a special honor or privilege for serving the cause of good. In this way, he has installed Corwyn Helg as Lord Mayor.

Corwyn is actually a doppleganger who has taken the place of the former blacksmith. Discovered by Paxzux in a cave north of town and recruited to help control the village and corrupt the Scarlet Knight, the doppleganger slew Corwyn Helg (see area **8D**). In exchange for treasure embezzled from the tax coffers, the doppleganger helps Paxzux control the Scarlet Knight by constantly praising his judgments and decisions on matters of criminal law. The constables, a band of mercenaries often used by Zaron in the past and recruited by Paxzux for his own purposes, answer directly to him. With their help, he has been skimming the tax revenues since the day he took office.

For the Dungeon Master

The village of Bechlaughter (pop. 180) is really little more than a scattering of 30 peasant hovels. These dwellings are all based upon a single design, that of a circular wall of stones roofed with thatch, with low wooden or curtain doors, and windows of horn. A hole in the peak of the roof releases smoke rising from the hearth, which is located in the center of the single circular room. The entire family shares this one room with any animals they own. They farm small plots of barley, potatoes, and oats; they raise goats, oxen, sheep, and geese. The villagers are all desperately poor.

There are no temples or shrines in Bechlaughter. Under Zaron's 30-year rule, all visiting clerics were put to death because Zaron perceived them as a threat. The villagers have almost forgotten the spiritual side of life. All they

have are their superstitions, and priest PCs find the village ripe for sowing their beliefs. Indeed, such actions are encouraged by the Scarlet Knight if the priest PC is lawful good.

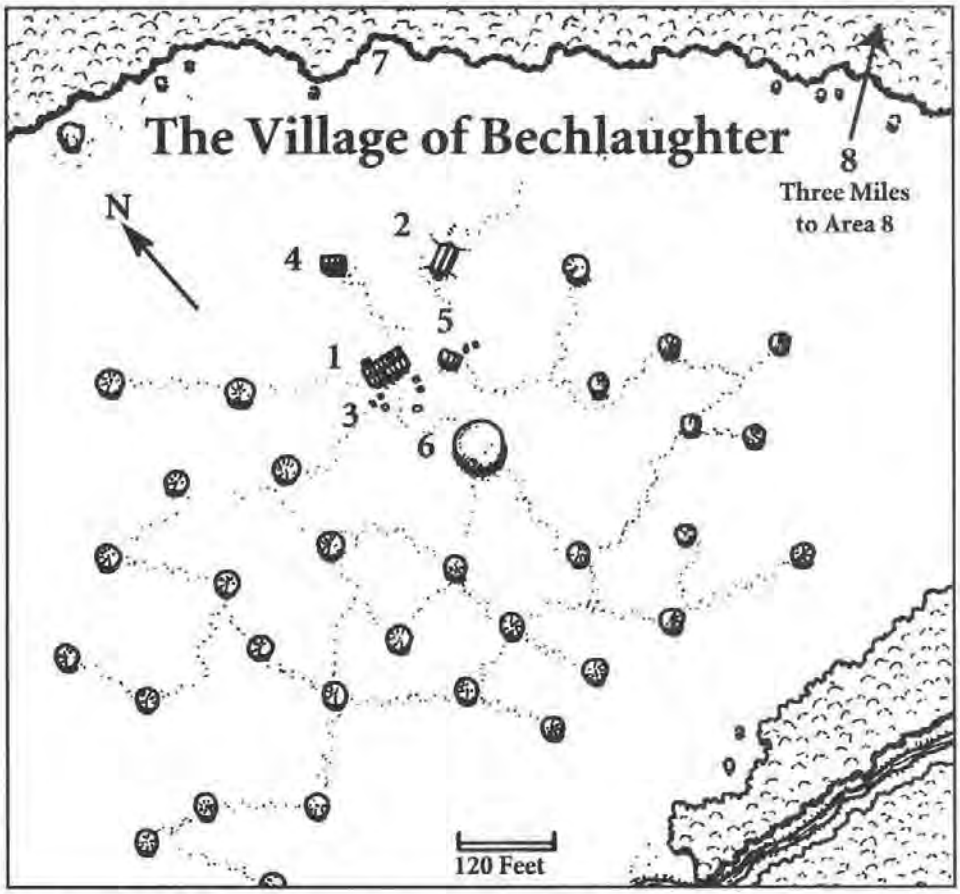
1. The Long House. A description of the Long House appears in the section "For the Players." The most recent list of the laws is posted at the entrance (see sidebar). Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs make their first entrance into the Long House:

> The room is hazy with the smoke of torches set along the walls, the floor strewn with rank straw to sop up the spilled beer, the tables hacked and beaten by many a tavern brawl. The stench of sweaty bodies mingles with the effluvia of stale beer and sour wine. Several locals stand or lean against the bar, while others cluster around the long tables.

1A. Bar. The barkeep is Dugan mac Mirran, a 0-level human. He is indifferent to most people and situations, content to serve drinks and cook in the kitchen. He can answer most any question about the village and its recent history, since he has lived here all his life, but he never volunteers information. (The amount he charges for information is up to the DM). He is neither greedy nor giving, and he has an annoying habit of saying "Whatever you wish" to any idea or request. Dugan is of average height and build, with a slight belly. His hair is dirty red, his pale skin freckled and hairy. He serves average beer and poor wine at cheap prices. The food is passable and cheaply priced, and lodgings are poor (see area **1E**) and cheap. Rations and cooking utensils may be purchased from Dugan at *PHB* prices.

1B. Kitchen. This is where Dugan cooks the food and stores his supplies, beer, and wine. He also sleeps here, on a pallet behind the beer barrels. One of the beer barrels is a fake; it contains Dugan's nest egg of 15 gp, 35 sp, and 160 cp.

1C. The Desk of Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg. Corwyn Helg was once the village blacksmith, but he has risen to a position of power in Bechlaughter. His desk sits just inside the entrance of the Long House so that he can see everyone who enters and leaves. This is where the townspeople come to pay



their taxes, make contracts, and settle disputes of civil law.

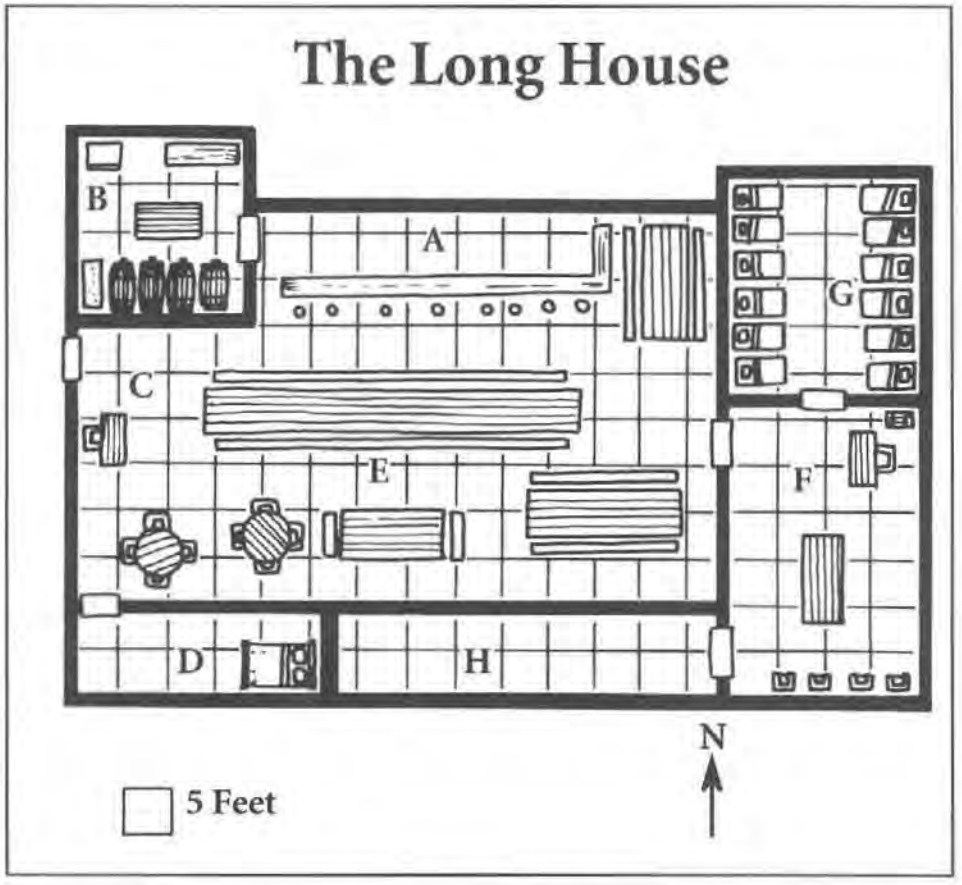
While he was only an adequate blacksmith, Corwyn, as a doppleganger, has made an energetic mayor. His decisions are quick and concise; he is obstinate in collecting the taxes and exacting the law. He is certainly very different from the quiet, unassuming blacksmith he used to be.

Corwyn Helg (doppleganger): INT very; AL N; AC 5 (10 in human form); MV 9; HD 4; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–12 or by weapon; MR see description; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975; *MM*/60.

Upon the PCs' arrival at the Long House, the Lord Mayor assesses the taxes they owe; they have one day in which to pay or be arrested. They are required to declare and pay taxes on all of their magical items, allowing Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg to learn who is the wealthiest (magically) among the party. This PC becomes his target for the remainder of the adventure. As described in the "Adventure Timeline" sidebar, Corwyn later informs Paxzux which PC he wants arrested for practicing magic. Once arrested, all property belonging to that PC is confiscated and falls into the hands of the mayor. The PCs may choose to hide some or all of their magical items; they are not searched, but Corwyn uses his innate power of *ESP* to read their minds and discover whether they are hiding anything.

Corwyn was a tall, powerfully-built man with a square jaw and a thin spidery mustache. If the doppleganger's true nature is discovered, he flees the village. He fights only to defend his life; he can always call upon the constables to fight his battles for him.

1D. Mayor's Quarters. Although Corwyn Helg has a house, his doppleganger prefers to live in the quarters appointed him. They are richer than any found in all of Bechlaughter. The bed is large and soft, draped in sheets of fine linen and warm blankets, the furniture richly upholstered, the carpets heavy and thick. He does not keep any treasure here for fear of prying eyes.



1E. The Common Room. This is where everyone eats and drinks. There are stools around the bar as well as long communal tables with benches. There are also two smaller tables near the mayor's desk, but these are generally reserved for the constables.

Unfortunately, this is also where guests sleep. Late at night, all the tables and benches are shoved to the walls and guests are invited to make camp on the floor. The price is 1 cp per night.

1F. Constables' Office. The constables conduct their day-to-day business of incarcerating people here. In this room, suspects are thoroughly searched (and all their possessions confiscated), questioned, tortured (if necessary), and prepared for jail or the gallows.

Numerous instruments of torture are displayed along the north wall, along with a large assortment of weapons, locks, chains, and manacles. There is a large sturdy table at the center of the room where "suspects" are bound and questioned. Beyond the table and nearer the east wall sits a large desk, and behind it a heavy iron-bound chest. Chairs line the south wall. There is a door in the north wall and another heavier door, replete with massive lock, in the west wall.

The chest is locked; it contains 75 cp, 20 sp, a suit of dwarf-sized chain mail worth 150 gp, and a small sack containing 150 cp and 60 sp. Later in the adventure, the sack is moved to the Cave of Cwuvain (see area **7**). There are enough weapons here to equip a fair-sized party of adventurers; all are for sale at *PHB* prices. The following weapons are available: one battle axe, one short bow, six dozen sheaf arrows, two dozen quarrels, two daggers, one morning star, one bardiche, two spears, one short sword, and one warhammer. Most of these weapons were taken from the bandits defeated by the Scarlet Knight. None of the weapons are magical. The keys to the jail and all its locks and manacles are kept in the desk.

1G. Constables' Quarters. Each side of this room is lined with six simple beds. At the foot of each bed sits a small box containing a spare set of clothing. The constables keep their treasure in the chest in room **1F**, so nothing is to be gained by searching this room.

1H. The Jail. The door to the jail is always locked. The jail itself is nothing more than a long room, its walls lined with heavy iron rings with manacles hanging from them. The floor is filthy and crawling with vermin. On the day of the PCs' arrival, a villager named Blayr Bennoch is in the jail. He has been accused of practicing black magic, so he is bound and gagged. He is to be hanged the day after the PCs arrive in Bechlaughter.

The charges against Blayr are completely unsubstantiated, but the Scarlet Knight will hear no evidence to the contrary, especially magical evidence such as a *detect lie* spell. The PCs may choose to champion Blayr in a trial by combat against the Scarlet Knight.

Blayr Bennoch had the misfortune of being in the woods one day and stumbling upon Paxzux in mid-transformation from goat to imp. Blayr ran away and said nothing about what he had seen but the imp accused him to protect itself. Blayr has not connected what he witnessed to his arrest, but if he is asked (secretly—the PCs are not allowed to question him "lest some spell be cast upon them") if anything unusual happened before he was arrested, he relates his account of the imp's transformation.

Blayr Bennoch (4th-level human fighter): AL NG; AC 9 (Dexterity); MV 12; F4; hp 26; THAC0 17 (16 with Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (+1 for Strength); ML 12; S 17 (+1/+1); C 13; D 15; I 10; W 9; Ch 12. Blayr carries no weapons or other equipment.

2. The Red Tent. In a field north of the Long House stands the garish red tent of the Scarlet Knight—a modestly-sized pavilion with an entrance at the south end of the tent. If the PCs break any of the laws of Bechlaughter and are captured, they are brought to this tent for judgment. They might also come here seeking a commission for an adventure, or they might be summoned at the request of the Scarlet Knight. Before entering, the PCs are instructed by one of the constables to address the Scarlet Knight as Sir Faegyn Cynnwyd, Sir Faegyn, or Lord.

The tent flap is pulled aside and you are shown inside. Behind a simple wooden desk sits a haggard man. His long blond mustache droops wearily, and dark circles stain the puffy flesh below his eyes. His hair is sparse and unkempt, his tunic and woolen breeches are wrinkled from having been slept in, and his hands tremble as he holds a quill pen, trying to write.

The tent is sparsely furnished with a simple bed, a few small chests, a rack of weapons, a stand of full plate armor, and the rough desk where the Scarlet Knight sits. After a few moments, he stops writing. He folds the parchment and hands it to one of the constables saying, "Post this immediately." Then he turns to you.

For the remainder of the encounter, use the description of the Scarlet Knight given below, keeping in mind his motivations and the external forces exerting control over him.

The Scarlet Knight (Sir Faegyn Cynnwyd): AC 0 (10 unarmored); MV 12; F8; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 11, C 13, I 12, W 10, Ch 10; AL LG; ML 16; XP 1,400.

Weapons: long sword, battle axe, mace, light crossbow, heavy lance, spear.

Armor: full plate and helm, optional shield.

Possessions: tent, heavy war horse with full tack and barding, pack mule with pack saddle, two small chests filled with camp equipment and spare clothing, blankets, small leather purse with 60 gp.

The pack mule, war horse, saddles and tack are kept in the stable (area **4**). All other possessions, weapons, and armor are in the tent or worn by the knight. He always carries his most prized possession—the long sword that is his namesake. This exceptional, non-magical weapon was forged by dwarves to be worn by a prince who died before he could wield it. It came to Sir Faegyn Cynnwyd by way of a long and intricate inheritance. The sword is forged of a rare alloy called bloodsteel, which gives it both its unusual color and name, the Scarlet Sword.

As mentioned, the Scarlet Knight hates magic of any sort. Wizards' magic, in particular, fills him with revulsion. He feels that magic is a bane upon the world, a scourge to be fought at every opportunity. He even distrusts clerical magic. Although he is not averse to the message of goodness preached by lawful good priests, their use of magic to heal the sick and combat evil makes him uneasy. He truly believes that the only effective weapons against evil are steel, fire, and the hangman's noose; everything else can be corrupted. Therefore, when he passes judgment against those accused of practicing magic, the only defense he allows is trial by combat (see "Laws of the Land" sidebar).

The knight has tried to keep his relationship with the imp a secret. Although he believes that the goat is a messenger sent by good deities, he feels that most people would not understand. However, if he were shown the true nature of the imp, he would immediately sever all ties with it and try to repair the injuries he has caused (see "Concluding the Adventure"). If he does discover the true

Example Scenario

The following is only one of many possible paths which the adventure could follow. This example only traces the adventure to the point where the PCs enter the Dome of the Mage. For a more information, see the "Adventure Timeline."

The PCs arrive in Bechlaughter and pay their taxes. That night, the Lord Mayor sneaks out to the woods for a brief meeting with the *polymorphed* imp (see area **1C**).

The same evening, the PCs see a shaft of light shoot up from the very top of the Dome of the Mage (see area **6A**). They see Zeek rise up from the secret door in the top of the dome. If the PCs neglect to follow it and instead return to the Long House and ask to speak with Blayr Bennoch in the jail their request is denied. If they sneak into the jail and interview Blayr, he tells them of seeing a white goat transform into an imp.

At noon the next day, Blayr Bennoch is to be hanged for practicing magic. If the PCs decide to champion him, the Scarlet Knight loses the competition of arms, and Blayr is declared innocent. If the PCs then ask the Scarlet Knight about the white goat that Blayr saw, the Knight admits to knowing the goat but refuses to believe it could be anything evil. To prove it, he takes the PCs to the edge of the forest, but the goat doesn't appear. Later that afternoon, the hermit shows up and makes his prediction (see "Adventure Timeline").

That evening, the Scarlet Knight returns to the woods, where Paxzux is waiting for him. The goat explains that he would not approach earlier because one of the PCs practices magic. It is with some reluctance that the Scarlet Knight agrees to arrest the accused PC.

In the meantime, the PCs notice Zeek the homonculous watching them from atop the gallows. If the PCs approach, the creature slowly flies away into the woods to the north. If they follow, it leads them to the edge of the forest where they stumble upon the encounter described at area **7.**

If they decide to secretly follow the mayor, Zeek leads them to the cave. If the PCs enter they find the imp's lair, where Corwyn, the imp, and the constables are having dinner and counting their money. They overhear the imp telling the mayor that one of the PCs will be arrested tonight and hanged the day after tomorrow. Before the PCs can do anything about what they have discovered, the mimic attacks. The constables join the fray, and the imp turns invisible and escapes. If the mayor is slain, he reverts to his doppleganger form. After this battle is over, the banshee attacks. When the PCs return to the village, the targeted PC is arrested and accused of practicing magic.

The next morning, the PCs must choose a champion to battle the Scarlet Knight. This time the Knight should win the battle and the targeted PC is condemned. However, at dawn on this day Zaron rises as a lich and, under the protection of his *prismatic sphere,* begins memorizing his spells.

Since they are linked telepathically with Zaron, the homonculous and the imp are aware of his awakening. Paxzux then visits the Scarlet Knight in his tent in broad daylight, something he has never done before, and tells him that a greater evil is near. He suggests that the PCs could prove the innocence of their comrade by entering the dome, finding Zaron, and destroying him. If they agree but cannot find the entrance, the imp appears in the form of a raven and shows them the secret door.

Rumor Table

Consult the rumor table any time the PCs ask around about adventures, attempt to purchase information, or try to listen in on other people's conversations.

Roll 1d12

1. The constables and the mayor are stealing tax money and hiding it in the forest. (Somewhat true.)

2. Zaron is not dead. He is still in his dome, probably brewing up some new evil. (Somewhat true.)

3. The tiny creature seen flying around the village is Zaron. (False.)

4. Zaron is dead. His dome is filled with treasure and magic. (Somewhat true.)

5. Some evenings, Sir Faegyn speaks with a white goat in the forest. (True.)

6. Some evenings, the mayor meets with a white goat in the forest. (True.)

7. The white goat seen in the forest is really Zaron. (False.)

8. The real Corwyn Helg is dead. He has been replaced by an imposter. (True.)

9. The real Scarlet Knight is dead. He has been replaced by an imposter. (False.)

10. Everyone in Bechlaughter is a witch. (False.)

11. On full moons, Sir Faegyn turns into a white goat and roams the forest. (False.)

12. By the dark of night, the mayor sprouts bat wings and flies around the village, sucking the blood of anyone he catches. (False.)

nature of the imp, he is emotionally devastated because of all the people who have suffered under his authority as Lord of Bechlaughter.

If at any time the PCs resist arrest and defeat the constables, Sir Faegyn Cynnwyd is not pleased. Any assault on the constables is a direct threat to his authority. He challenges the most honorable warrior PC to a test of arms to see who will control the village; this need not be a battle to the death. If the Scarlet Knight loses, he packs his things and leaves the village; the victor is now Lord of Bechlaughter and may find himself courted by the wily imp (in goat form). However, if the Scarlet Knight wins, he expects the other PCs to abide by the law and pay for their crimes. If the PCs are not honorable and attack the Scarlet Knight as a group, he does not back down from them. Any remaining constables come to his aid at such a time.

3. The Market.

Eleven merchants sit along the south wall of the Long House, their wares displayed on blankets spread before them or in cages stacked along the wall. You see brassware, woolens, baskets of grain and nuts, dried meat and fruit, live geese and sheep. Wicker baskets and burlap sacks are for sale, as well as red tallow candles, simple leather goods, local herbs, salt, and seeds. The merchants sit quietly and wait to make a sale, never screaming and haggling. Instead, they quietly bicker and argue among themselves about prices and supplies.

As the PCs shop in the market, most of the merchants are polite but indifferent toward them. They can be engaged in conversation if the PCs show an interest in their wares. Most items sell for *PHB* prices. This is the best place for the PCs to hear the various rumors floating around the village (see "Rumor Table"). If the PCs ask specifically about adventures in the area, Alain the Chandler tells them "The Tale of Cwuvain" (see sidebar, page 15).

Alain the Chandler: AL LN; AC 10; MV 6; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT see below; Dmg see below; S 7; D 11; C 13; I 12; W 14; Ch 12; ML 6.

Alain the Chandler is too old (he is 73) and decrepit to defend himself against attack. He sells red tallow candles at the market and is considered the village elder because of his great age and wisdom. If the "Rumor Table" is used during encounters with Alain, any roll resulting in a false statement should be ignored and another roll made.

4. The Stable. This building is located north of the Long House. The PCs may stable their mounts here (unless they own fantastic mounts like griffons or giant lizards) for 2 cp per night. This includes hay and grooming. The Scarlet Knight keeps his own mount here, a heavy war horse named Aunt Hester. Tack and barding, grain, hay, torches, and lantern oil may be purchased here at *PHB* prices. There are also three riding horses and two mules for sale if the PCs need mounts.

The PCs might want to hire a guide to help them explore the woods or to lead them to the Cave of Cwuvain. The only person willing to guide them who has the skill to do so is a woodsman named Haneg Fyr. They can find him hanging around the stable most of the time. For 2 sp and a cloak, he is willing to guide them anywhere they might like to go.

Haneg Fyr: AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 12, C 11, I 10, W 14, Ch 9; AL LN; ML 10. NWP: tracking (14), hunting (13); long bow, 12 sheaf arrows, 2 hand axes, leather armor

Haneg is of average build and height, with long, braided red hair. His face is freckled by the sun. Haneg chops firewood to sell and hunts in the forest for meat and skins. He knows the area around Bechlaughter very well and can guide to and from any point within a 12-mile radius of Zaron's dome. Haneg has seen some strange things in the woods, and he might be willing to talk about them.

If the PCs hire Haneg Fyr as a guide, they have the opportunity to learn of some of the things that have been going on around Bechlaughter for the last few months. However, Haneg is a withdrawn man who hints only that he has "seen a thing or two that might surprise you." It takes some prying (and roleplaying) to get him to talk. When at last he opens up, he says:

"I spend a good deal of time in these woods, and I know their ways and backways like nobody else. These woods are full of secret places and enchanted groves, where all manner of creatures lair. There are caves here that no man has explored, caves that lead to the deep secret places of the world. But you won't find anything stranger than what I saw one night at the very edge of these woods, right at the skirts of the village.

"It was about a month ago, the night I saw the Scarlet Knight talking to a white goat—and the goat talked back. I wasn't close enough to hear what they said, and I didn't dare move closer for fear of being heard, but they talked for more than two turns of a glass. When they finished, the Scarlet Knight returned to the village, but the goat stayed, so I stayed and watched him. Pretty soon, here comes the Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg with two constables carrying an iron-

bound chest. They nodded to the goat and kept going deeper into the wood, and that goat followed them. So I followed, but I didn't get very far before something came at me out of the dark. It was flying through the air and it clawed at my eyes. It missed me, but some of its venom dropped on my arm, and it burned something fierce."

He shows you his arm where a scarred patch of mottled, hairless skin testifies to the truth of his tale. He continues, "I never did get a good look at the creature, nor at where the Mayor and the constables went with that goat. But I suspect they were heading toward the Cave of Cwuvain."

If the PCs ask about the Cave of Cwuvain, Haneg tells them a tale (see adjacent sidebar). If they have already heard the tale, then the DM should paraphrase the narrative given in the sidebar, adding that Haneg led the lone adventurer to the Cave of Cwuvain and waited outside the entrance for a week before finally giving up hope of his ever returning.

5. The Gallows. This tall wooden structure is prominently displayed near the Long House, and on the day of the PCs' arrival, four people have been hanged. Their corpses still dangle by ropes and are not removed until after nightfall. These unfortunate people (three men and one woman) were accused of practicing magic.

6. The Dome of the Mage.

Near the center of the village squats a curious silver dome, like the very topmost region of a deeply-buried silver-plated giant. It seems to have no doors or windows, just a uniform silver surface polished to a mirror sheen. Luckily, the day is cloudy, for on a sunny day it must be blinding.

The dome's only entrance is a small secret door at the very top of the building. The outside of the dome is sheeted in thin plates of polished silver bolted together and to the stone surface beneath. The surface is very smooth, impossible for non-thief PCs to ascend unaided, while thieves must use climbing tools or magical assistance to reach the top (see chapter 14 in the *PHB*). There are no protrusions on the outside of the dome by which to secure a rope for descending through the secret door. The secret door screws open like a watertight hatch, swinging down on steel hinges when opened.

If the PCs are in the area of the dome at night, read or paraphrase the following:

A shaft of light shoots up from the very top of the dome, and though it only lasts a moment, you definitely see a small winged humanoid rise up from an opening in the dome.

This is the PCs' first glimpse of Zaron's homonculous. The PCs can easily follow it, since the homonculous intentionally flies slowly for this very purpose. It leads them to the meeting between Corwyn Helg and Paxzux described in the "Adventure Timeline" sidebar.

6A. Chamber of Light. Once the PCs gain entrance to the dome, read or paraphrase the following:

From your vantage point, you have an excellent view of the entire chamber. This large room is cylindrical, with a tall pedestal of black stone rising from the center of the floor far below. Atop the pedestal sits a small shimmering hemisphere of scintillating rainbow colors. It is only a few feet tall, but it matches the silver dome in its proportions. The light emanating from it is painfully bright, and your eyes are dazzled by its vibrant, multicolored light.

A broad balcony runs the entire circumference of the room, overlooking the pedestal and the hemisphere of light. A number of boxes and crates have been stacked along the eastern side of the balcony. There appear to be no stairs leading down to the floor, and you see no door of any sort or any other way of getting off the balcony except by way of a long drop to the floor.

The drop from the secret door to the balcony is 30', to the top of the pedestal 50', and to the floor 90'. The dome of bright light described in the boxed text is a *prismatic sphere* that is half buried in the top of the pedestal; thus its dome-shaped appearance. The pedestal is hollow, and the lower half of the *sphere* illuminates its interior (see below). Note that any character of less than 8 HD or levels who passes within 20' of the *prismatic sphere* without shielding his eyes from the light is blinded for 2d4 turns. Note also that the *prismatic sphere* is directly below the secret door, therefore anyone dropping in by way of *feather fall* or similar spell, or being lowered by rope, must somehow avoid contacting the *sphere* or suffer the dire consequences detailed in the spell's description.

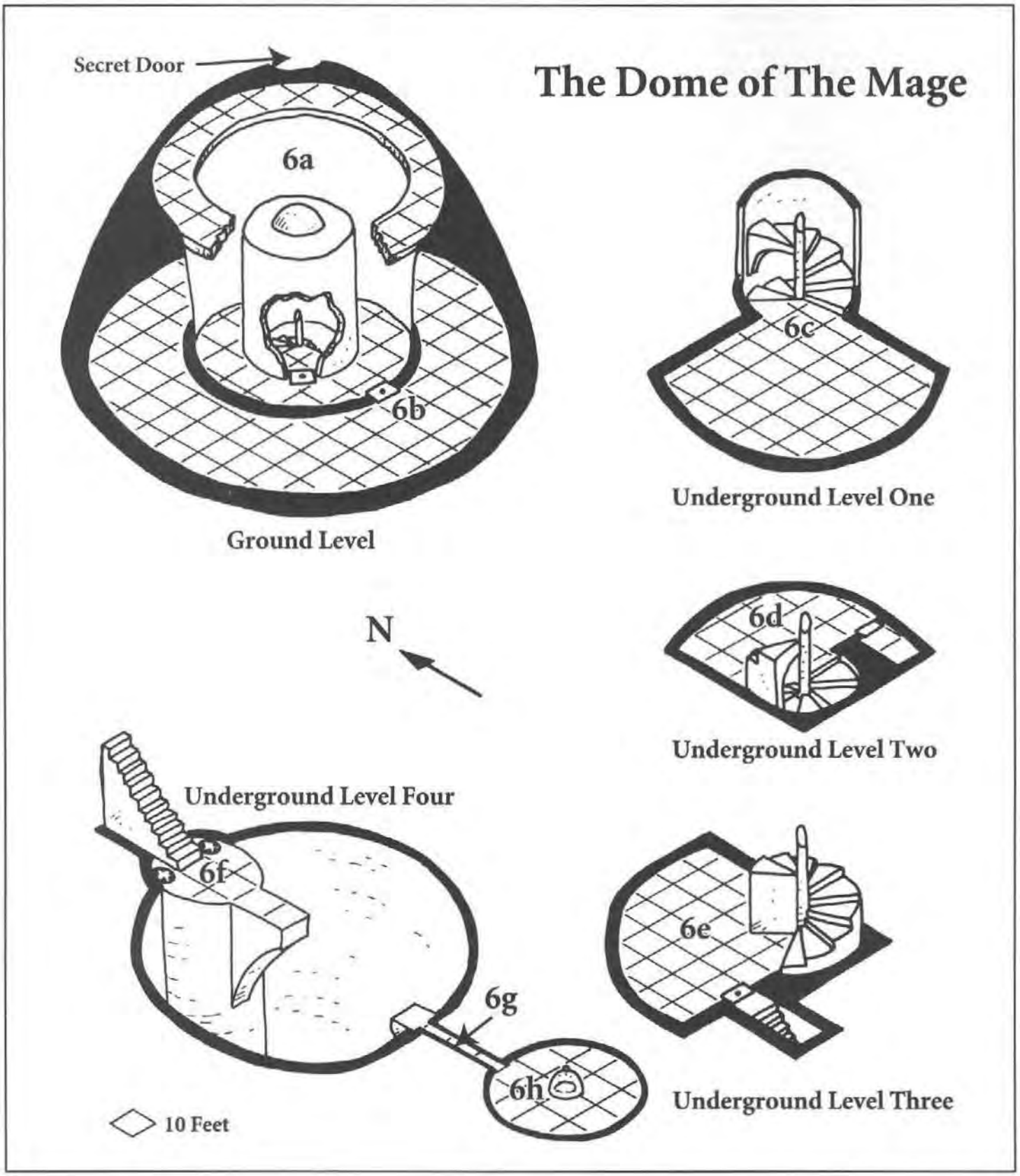
Zaron's body rests atop the pedestal protected by the *prismatic sphere.* The *sphere* has been affected by a *permanency* spell. If the *prismatic sphere* is removed before the morning of the third day when Zaron arises as a lich (see "Adventure Timeline" sidebar), he is completely vulnerable to attack. However, unless his body is completely destroyed via acid or fire and his phylactery also destroyed, three days after the PCs arrive in Bechlaughter his transformation is complete, and he rises as a lich. Zaron's phylactery is hidden in the cave at area **6H.**

Zaron (lich): INT supra-genius; AL LE; AC 0; MV 6; HD 12; hp 58; THAC0 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10; SA fear, paralysis, spells; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 25% (same as imp, see area **8E**); SZ M (5'10"); ML 18; XP 8,000; *MM*/222–223.

The Tale of Cwuvain

The DM should read or paraphrase the following when indicated in the text.

"Hidden deep in the forest is a haunted cavern called the Cave of Cwuvain. According to the old tales, elves lived in this area long, long ago, and their fairest and bravest was the Princess Cwuvain. In a hard-fought battle against an evil priest, Cwuvain won a magical staff, but the staff enchanted her, and she grew cruel and malicious. At last, her own people drove her away, so she made war against them. The elves fought her, and in the end trapped her in a cave. At last she fell, overcome by the arrows of the elves, and in a hidden cavern she died. But her voice can forever be heard calling in the darkness of the woods, and it is by this sound that her cave can be found. I have seen the cave and heard it moan, but I have never ventured beyond the entrance. No one has ever fully explored it nor found the cavern where Cwuvain fell. But they say the elves sealed her in a tomb with her magical staff and all her treasure. A few years ago, a lone adventurer entered the cave, and he has not been seen since."


The Dome of The Mage
Secret Door
6a
6b
Ground Level
6c
Underground Level One
N
6d
Underground Level Two
Underground Level Four
6f
6e
6g
6h
Underground Level Three
10 Feet

Spells: *burning hands, erase, jump, magic missile, shocking grasp; ESP, levitate, pyrotechnics, spectral hand, wizard lock; clairvoyance, dispel magic, fly, lightning bolt, slow; bestow curse, contagion, ice storm, polymorph other, wizard eye; animate dead, cone of cold, false vision, feeblemind, wall of force; chain lightning, eyebite, guards and wards, true seeing; Drawmij's instant summons, finger of death, teleport without error; incendiary cloud, screen, sink; Bigby's crushing hand, temporal stasis.*

When Zaron awakens, he is without spells. He takes the time to memorize his spells before exiting the *prismatic sphere.* He casts spells at the 18th-level of ability. If the PCs attempt to remove the *prismatic sphere* after Zaron has arisen (3rd day) but before he has memorized his spells and exited the dome (4th day), he attacks them as a lich, but without the ability to cast spells (he can still use his magical items against them). If the PCs defeat him in this form, award them 4,000 XP.

Zaron has collected all his spell books around him along with his more important magical items. If the *sphere* is removed, the following things may be found: seven spell books, a *ring of spell turning,* a *staff of withering,* a *wand of polymorphing,* a *wand of earth and stone,* and a wizard's scroll containing the following spells enscribed at 17th level: *summon swarm, dimension door, wall of ice,* and *force cage.*

There are two doors at floor level. The door in the southern section of wall is large and sturdy, bound in iron and etched with runes. It is locked but not trapped. The door into the hollow pedestal is likewise locked, but it is set with a *firetrap* spell centered on the door handle. Detonation inflicts 1d4+18 hp damage. This door opens onto a stone landing at the top of a spiral staircase; this area is lit from above by the lower half of the *prismatic sphere.* There is an unlit torch in a bronze sconce on the wall at the top of the stairs. The stairs lead down 40' to area **6C.**

The boxes and crates on the balcony contain old hay, as though they were once used to transport fragile items. If the PCs search the crates, they find a well-chewed pair of slippers (*slippers of spider climbing*), a tattered blanket, and a gold ring with its gemstone missing (worth 45 gp). This crate is Zeek's lair, and the objects he has collected remind him of his master.

Adventure Timeline

This sequence of events is by no means set in stone, since the PCs' actions will greatly alter how the adventure progresses.

❖ **Day One:** The PCs arrive in Bechlaughter. That night, the Lord Mayor informs Paxzux which PC he wants arrested. Since it is too late for the imp to contact the Scarlet Knight, he waits until the following night to accuse the chosen PC of practicing magic.

❖ **Day Two:** At noon, Blayr Bennoch is to be hanged for practicing magic. Later that afternoon, a strange old hermit shows up. He predicts the reawakening of a great evil, saying that "... at dawn two days hence, the dead will rise and claim his own!" This pronouncement greatly affects the Scarlet Knight, for he believes (rightly) that the hermit is predicting the return of Zaron.

That evening, Paxzux meets with the Scarlet Knight and accuses one of the PCs of practicing magic. He may suggest that the gods would be pleased if the PCs were to kill the homonculous. After its meeting with the Scarlet Knight, the imp waits for the Lord Mayor to arrive, and together with two constables, they visit the Cave of Cwuvain. The Scarlet Knight performs the arrest (backed by the constables) in the wee hours of the morning. If the PCs are out adventuring at the time, the accused PC is arrested upon the party's return to the village. The PC is scheduled to be hanged at noon of the fourth day.

If the PCs are in town just before dark, they notice the homonculous watching them from atop the gallows. If approached, the creature slowly flies away into the woods to the north. If followed, it leads them to the encounter described in "At the Forest's Edge." Once in the forest, it becomes very obvious that the homonculous is leading the PCs somewhere, as it flits from tree to tree and emits shrill squeals to lead the PCs through the darkness.

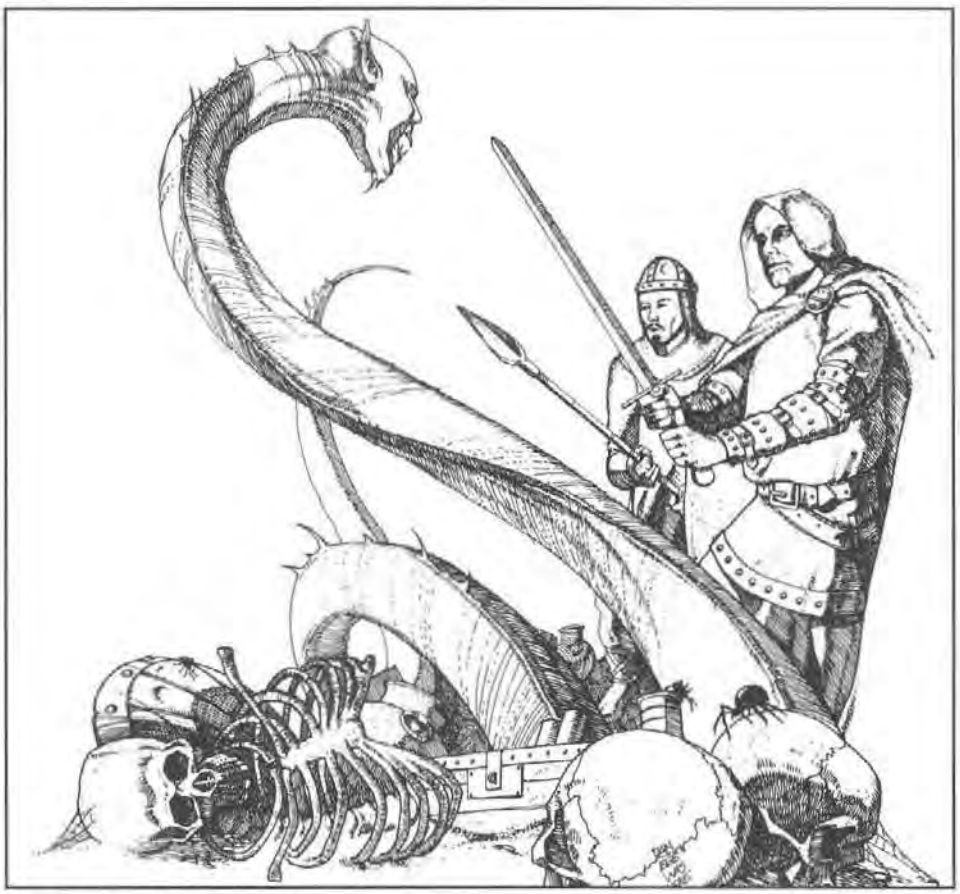
❖ **Day Three:** At dawn, Zaron arises as a lich and, under the protection of his *prismatic sphere,* begins to memorize his spells. He spends one day restoring his spells before emerging on the morning of the fourth day (see "Concluding the Adventure"). Since they are linked telepathically with Zaron, the homonculous and the imp are aware of his awakening. Now the imp may even try to strike a bargain with the PCs if they promise to destroy Zaron. If they have not already found the secret entrance, Paxzux approaches them in its other form, that of a raven, and tells them how they can get into the Dome of the Mage. Alternatively, Paxzux might suggest to the Scarlet Knight that the PCs prove the innocence of their arrested friend (see above) by finding and destroying Zaron before he arises. The homonculous does whatever it can to stop them.

❖ **Day Four:** Zaron exits his dome (see "Concluding the Adventure").

Zeek (homonculous): INT supragenius; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6, fly 18 (B); HD 2; hp 11; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA bite causes sleep; SZ T (18" tall); ML 14; XP 420; *MM*/192.

Zeek is rarely found in his crate (5% chance). He spends most of his time spying in town. Zeek fights only to protect his master's body while he is helpless and to defend himself if attacked. Zeek is smart enough to know that his master is invulnerable as long as the *prismatic sphere* is in place. The homonculous has no motivations or ambitions of his own; he exists only to serve his master. If he is aware of the PCs' entrance into the dome, Zeek follows them at a discreet distance, waiting for an opportunity to thwart them in some manner.

If the PCs attempt to destroy the *prismatic sphere* by using the scrolls and other items found throughout the adventure (areas **6B, 6C, 8D**), Zeek swoops down and attempts to snatch one of the items from the PC wizard before he can complete the casting; to do so requires a successful attack roll vs. AC 10 (since the mage is standing still, reading and making no attempt to defend against attack), adjusted for magical defenses such as a *shield* spell or magical rings, etc. If Zeek succeeds, he flies away and hides the scroll in the forest north of the village.



6B. Chamber of Darkness.

> The heavy door opens with a shove, releasing a stench of decay and old lingering evil. For the briefest of instants you hear a faint whispering of movement. As the light spills into this dark chamber, long shadows slither away into the darker recesses of the room, yet one shadow seems to linger a moment before finally retreating.
>
> Yellow bones and tattered bits of rag litter the stone floor here, while thick strands of old spider webs dangle from the arched ceiling. But there is an order to the disorder, for you see careful paths cleared through the bones and litter.
>
> The paths are narrow and swept clean, as though frequented by many feet. The room stretches into darkness to the east and west.

The door, when closed, is warded by a powerful illusion, rendering it *invisible* from within the chamber (Note: This is an excellent opportunity for Zeek to thwart the PCs by closing the door behind them). Thus, whichever direction the party goes, they should believe that they are in an endless passage, for as they circle the room, the dark naga that lairs here continually sweeps new paths through the bones and litter with her serpentine body as she follows them, waiting for the perfect moment to strike.

Helwa (dark naga): INT exceptional; AL LE; AC 6; MV 13; HD 9; hp 57; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1–4/2–8; SA see below; SZ L (11' long); ML 15; XP 4,000; *MM*/267.

Spells: *audible glamer, color spray, shield, sleep; darkness 15' radius, web; hold person, vampiric touch.*

Helwa is in the service of Zaron. In exchange for protecting the upper levels of the dome, Zaron assists the naga in creating verbal-only versions of magic spells. Although she would prefer not to battle to the death, she is much more afraid of Zaron than of anything the PCs might be able to do to her. Therefore, she cannot let the PCs escape alive. If forced to, she can locate the illusion-protected door.

Before attacking, Helwa attempts to lure the party away from the door with her *audible glamer* spell. She also uses her innate *ESP* ability to read their minds and determine the most opportune moment to attack. Although fully capable of battling the PCs alone, she prefers to toy with them and extend her pleasure in the kill.

Helwa possesses a rare magical item called *dragon bones*. These magical ankle bones of dead dragons, when scattered upon stone or earth, rise up in the form of human skeletons and attack whomever the master of the bones may wish, but when the command word (in this case, "Abate") is spoken, they return to their former state. Unlike normal undead skeletons, they cannot be turned or destroyed by priests and are not harmed by holy water. If reduced to 0 hp, the skeletons revert back to their dragon bone state but lose all magical properties and can never rise again as a skeletons.

Dragon Bones (12 skeletons): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (weapon); SD see below; MR see below; SZ M; ML special; XP 120 per bone; *MM*/315 (skeleton).

Helwa scatters all 12 *dragon bones* on the floor of her chamber. The skeletons take two melee rounds to form, during which time they cannot defend themselves. They form fully armed, often wearing odd bits of old armor (though this does not affect their armor class). Like undead skeletons, *dragon bones* suffer only half damage from edged and piercing weapons, and they are not affected by *charm, sleep, hold,* or cold-based spells. They attack until destroyed, or until called off by the naga. After scattering the *dragon bones* on the ground, the naga sends the skeletons after the PCs while waiting in the shadows for the outcome of the battle. She may also choose to attack in thick of the battle, casting her *darkness* spell before entering the fray.

In a pile of old bones on the north side of the chamber is the naga's treasure: her spellbook containing the spells listed above, and a mage's scroll with the following spells (enscribed at 12th level); *enlarge, cone of cold,* and *dispel magic.* The spellbook contains verbal-only spells, as are usable by the naga, and so may be unavailable to the PCs (DM's decision). In any case, the spellbook would be very valuable to sages and certain mages because of the unusual nature of its spells.

6C. The Study.

The staircase opens into a wide room before continuing down into the earth. Along the far wall stands a huge convex bookcase literally sagging with all manner of dark and dusty tomes. The shelves are scattered with various scrolls and strange oddities, skulls, astrological instruments, and strange gleaming shapes of crystal. Near the stairs stands a large oak desk, its top littered with loose papers and mummified animal remains. Most of the floor is covered by a large, plush circular carpet. It is decorated with fabulous and incomprehensible mathematical designs. Several dark stains mar the otherworldly beauty of the carpet, and its obvious value is diminished by a large black scoring caused by an old fire.

As would be expected in the library of a high-level mage, this room contains a wild assortment of rare and arcane titles. Any attempt to catalog them would far exceed the space provided here. If sold on the open market, the books in this room would garnish enough money to keep a party of adventurers safely in the inn for many a year. The carpet, as mentioned, has been ruined by a magical accident, a burn suffered when one of Helwa's experimental verbal-only spells went haywire. The desk has three drawers; one of them is locked and contains a small pouch with 19 pp. The objects atop the desk are of no value.

Of the more interesting items found on the shelves is a mage's scroll containing the spells *gust of wind, magic missile,* and *continual light.* One of the gleaming shapes of crystal is actually a large ruby worth 1,500 gp. The stairs lead down 30' to area **6D**.

6D. Bedchamber.

This low-roofed chamber is furnished with a small, ordinary bed. Beside the bed stands a bronze brazier filled with charcoal. Near the stairs is a small door. In the north corner of the room looms a massive iron cage. It looks like the cage of some gargantuan bird, but the door is ajar and its occupant has obviously escaped. There is a book lying at the bottom of the cage.

The bed and brazier are unremarkable. The small door opens into a closet. Among the more ordinary cloaks, robes, and boots is a *robe of useful items.* Only one item remains on the robe: a bridge. When removed and thrown to the ground, a 50' section of bridge appears (provided there is enough space in the room, otherwise nothing happens). The bridge is magical and weightless, so it can be moved and placed by a single person with relative ease, but it exists only for one hour before disappearing in a puff of yellow smoke. In the pocket of one of the other robes is a *wand of shrinking.* When aimed at an object or person, the *wand* fires a thin silver beam up to 140 yards. The beam shrinks any object or person to 10% its former size. The effect lasts for 1d4+1 turns, but it can be reversed via an *enlarge* spell or a *potion of growth.* The *wand* can be used only four times per hour before it needs to "rest" for one hour; during this time, it cannot be used. The wand has an initiative modifier of +5. It has seven charges.

The cage was Paxzux's prison. The book on the floor of the cage is titled *Poisons and Venoms;* it is worth 100 gp.

6E. The Lab.

In the center of this wide chamber stands a complete alchemist's laboratory, with a sturdy marble table and glass beakers. Behind the table is a cabinet with many doors and drawers, while in the south wall is a huge black-iron door etched with runes.

This is a complete alchemist's lab worth over 10,000 gp. There are three completed potions on the table: a *potion of flying,* a *potion of gaseous form,* and a *potion of growth.* The cabinet contains a wide assortment of rare and dangerous powders and liquids, feathers, inks, and other items used by alchemists. Careless mixing of the items or accidental damage to the cabinet could result in an explosion or the creation of some noxious fumes, at the DM's discretion.

The iron door is locked and warded against extraplanar creatures and creatures of a conjured nature; the imp and the homonculous cannot pass this door. The runes on the door are part of this magical ward. The portal opens onto a staircase leading down 50' to area **6F**.

6F. The Conjuring Pit. This chamber was used by Zaron to conjure beings from the nether regions. The stench of their evil still pervades the area.

The staircase leads downward. The stairs and walls are incredibly smooth. Soon, they bring you to a circular landing, where the passage ends in a narrow platform jutting out over a deep, black pit. The surface of the platform is scored by many old burns. From the pit rises a horrible stench and a sound of moaning voices. On the other side of the pit, seemingly cut off from this side of the chamber, another smaller platform juts out from the wall. To either side of the stairs is a small alcove. Each alcove holds a large glowing statue of a warrior. It may be some trick of the light, but one of the statues appears to be moving.

The statues are stone guardians, placed here by Zaron to assist him should any conjured creature get out of hand. The statues have orders to attack anyone who enters the room, except Zaron.

Stone guardians (2): INT non-; AL N; AC 2; MV 9; HD 4+4; hp 32, 30; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2–9/2–9; SD see below; SZ L (8' tall); ML 20; XP 420 each; *MM*/165, 171.

Stone guardians suffer only one-quarter damage from edged weapons and half damage from cold, fire, and electrical attacks. As they attack, they move to block any escape up the stairs. They pursue the PCs up the stairs, but not beyond the door.

The pit is 100' deep, but its bottom is covered in larvae, reducing falling damage by half. Zaron used the larvae as bribes when dealing with powerful creatures from the lower planes, but he plans to feed off their energies after becoming a lich. How he came upon such a large horde of these abominable creatures would be a tale indeed!

Larvae (70): INT semi-; AL NE; AC 7; MV 3; HD 1–1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SA wounding, disease; SZ M; ML 3; XP 35; *PLANESCAPE® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix.*

Anyone surviving a fall into the pit begins to sink into the morass of slithering larvae. Since the larvae are nearly mindless, they do not attack unless attacked first. However, unless a PC is rescued within three rounds, he sinks below the surface of the larval pool, suffering 1–6 hp crushing and smothering damage per round. At the DM's discretion, anyone actually rescued from a dip in the larval pool is required to make a

System Shock roll or be rendered temporarily (or permanently, depending on the length of the stay) insane.

Larvae resemble large worms with distorted human faces. The bite of a larva continues to bleed for 1 hp damage per round until bound, and the victim must save vs. poison or contract a rotting disease that kills within one month; a *cure disease* spell destroys the disease.

The destruction of some or all of the larvae displeases Zaron. If the PCs kill all the larvae, Zaron deals with them most harshly upon his return (see "Concluding the Adventure").

At the base of the platform, jutting from the south side of the pit, is a small round bronze door which opens into a tiny tube-like passage (area **6G** below).

6G. The Wizard's Way. This passage is only 8" tall, barring normal-sized PCs from entry. It leads 30' to Zaron's phylactery at area **6H.** To discourage anyone from reaching his phylactery, Zaron has placed a *symbol of hopelessness* on the floor of the passage. Anyone passing over it must save vs. spell or turn back in dejection. The *hopelessness* lasts for 3d4 turns.

6H. Cavern of the Living Dead.

> The passage opens into a large circular chamber, its walls shaped from some old cave. The circumference is almost perfectly circular, and the marks of a chisel are quite plain upon the walls. Numerous niches have been carved into the walls; each one holds a badly-decayed human corpse.
>
> In the center of the room, trapped beneath a glass case and resting atop a purple cushion, is a gleaming golden beetle. The scarab is encrusted with crushed rubies and tiny black pearls.

Once the PCs enter this chamber, they have two rounds to explore before the zombies lying in the niches rise up and begin to attack.

Zombies (20): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* poison, cold-based spells, and death magic; ML special; XP 65; *MM*/373.

The zombies attack until destroyed or turned; they never check morale. If the PCs have not yet returned to their former size after passing through area **6G**, the zombies should be treated as giants relative to the PCs' size. These zombies are former citizens of Bechlaughter who failed to pay their taxes to Zaron.

The beetle is wrought of solid gold, with a hinged shell encrusted with rubies and tiny black pearls. Beneath the shell are wings carved from thinly-sliced alicorn (unicorn's horn). Its base material value is 15,000 gp. Under the wings is a small hidden compartment that contains a *ring of polymorphing.* The *ring* changes the wearer into a normal-sized bat. Should Zaron's body be destroyed and his spirit be forced to inhabit one of the zombies, he uses the *ring* to escape the room.

The beetle is the phylactery of the evil lich Zaron; it contains his life force. Anyone who possesses it upon Zaron's transformation and awakening (see "Concluding the Adventure") comes under intense scrutiny by the evil lich, but if that PC knows the nature of the beetle, he can use the threat of its destruction to control Zaron.

To reach the beetle, its glass covering must be removed. This is no simple task, since doing so releases the invisible and deadly gas contained within. The gas immediately disperses into the room, completely filling area **6G** as well. Anyone breathing the gas (type N) must save vs. poison or die; the cloud dissipates in four rounds.

7. At the Forest's Edge. Although not a defined area, the forest's edge north of town is an area frequented by many of the major NPCs and monsters in this adventure. Paxzux may be encountered here in either his imp or goat form, and less frequently in the form of a large black raven.

If the PCs have become suspicious of Corwyn Helg and have decided to follow him to the forest, or if they are snooping about the forest on the night of the second day, they hear someone walking through the woods. If they decide to confront that person, they meet Corwyn Helg walking along a forest path in the company of two constables. The DM should indicate to the PCs that, for a moment, they see a flash of white—like some white-furred animal dashing into the underbrush directly behind the constables. The mayor greets the PCs. If they question him about his business, he answers that he is investigating "wild tales" of secret rites of black magic being performed in a hidden cave. He bids them good evening and continues on his way, rejecting any offers of help. As the constables pass, the PCs notice that one of them is carrying a small but bulky sack over his shoulder. If the PCs insist on coming along to help, Corwyn and the constables try to lose the party in the forest. Paxzux helps to distract and confuse them by attacking the group for one round (in his imp form; see area **8D** for statistics). During the attack, Corwyn and the constables attempt to slip away. If the PCs decide to follow Corwyn and the constables secretly, Paxzux leads them to the Cave of Cwuvain.

If the PCs decide to leave the path, hide, and wait to see who passes, read or paraphrase the following:

> For a moment, the clouds break and a shaft of moonlight dimly illuminates the path. You hear footsteps approaching closer, and then a shadow breaks into the moonlight. It is a large white goat. The goat is followed immediately by the Lord Mayor, then by two constables, one of them carrying a small sack over his shoulder. These men trod the paths of the wild forest without benefit of lantern or torch.

If the PCs attack Corwyn Helg and the constables, Paxzux flees the area. The constables enter a berserker rage and fight to the death, but Corwyn Helg tries to slip out of the battle. The small sack contains 60 sp and 150 cp.

8. The Cave of Cwuvain.

> The entrance to the cave is low and arched by the gnarled roots of a tremendous old oak tree. At its mouth, the floor of the cave is strewn with leaves and forest debris, but it is not hard to spot the signs of recent passage, and there is a large black smudge on the roof where it looks as if someone stood there for some time holding a torch. There is also the slightest hint of a breeze issuing from the mouth of the cave, carrying with it a smell of earth and the faintest whisper of a moan.

As the PCs progress deeper into the cave, the moan grows ever louder until its source is reached at area **8E.**

8A. The Auditorium. This large chamber is wide and ranges from 5'–7' high, with many dark alcoves and fissures in the walls. The floor is strewn with rocky debris which reduces the PCs' movement rate by one-quarter

However, a cleared path stretches from the entrance to area **8B**. There is nothing else of interest here.

8B. The Crooked Stair. This staircase is partially natural and partially man-made. PCs can find the staircase by way of a great crack in the wall of area **8A**. The staircase is narrow, wide enough for only one human-sized creature to pass. The steps tilt dangerously toward the gaping fissure which borders the left-hand side of the staircase for most of its course. Anyone who falls into the fissure drops 100'–150', depending on where on the stair the fall occurs. If Paxzux finds the PCs intruding and decides to attack them, he does so on the staircase. So narrow and steep are the stairs that anyone engaged in battle who suffers a miss while attacking must roll against his Dexterity or topple into the fissure.

8C. The Branches. In this area, the PCs must choose between numerous branching passages. Most often, passages lead to dead ends. It is possible for the PCs to become separated in here or to lose their way. If the PCs find their way to the dead end branch furthest southeast, they find the skeleton of the adventurer mentioned in "The Tale of Cwuvain." The bones are draped in pitiful rags, but the hands still clutch a small iron box. The box is locked (the key lies under the bones); it contains one *potion of healing*, two vials of holy water, and one *scroll of protection from undead*.

8D. The Imp's Lair. How the PCs find this chamber is entirely dependent on what has occurred during the adventure up to this point. They may find any or all of the following: Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg (in human or doppleganger form), Paxzux (in goat, raven, or imp form), or any number of constables. Therefore, no boxed text description is given.

This cave is the lair of Zaron's imp, Paxzux. He spends most of the daylight hours here, leaving only near dusk to conduct his business with the Scarlet Knight and the Lord Mayor. If he is aware of the PCs' approach, Paxzux turns *invisible* and waits to see what they will do.

Paxzux (imp): INT average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6, fly 18 (A); HD 2+2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA poison; SD see below; MR 25%; SZ T (2' tall); ML 8; XP 1,400; *MM*/201.

Paxzux and Zeek

Paxzux is Zaron's familiar. Like most imps, Paxzux has little love for his master; unlike most imps, he was unable to dominate Zaron. The evil mage had too strong a will to be influenced by the suggestions of the wily imp. At times, Zaron allowed Paxzux to spy on the villagers, but for the most part he kept the imp locked up in the dome.

After the homonculous was created, Zaron assigned it to watch over the villagers, leaving Paxzux with nothing to occupy his time. Paxzux designed escapes from the dome and plotted the homonculous' assassination, but to no avail. His most ingenious designs crumbled under Zaron's all-seeing eye, while his every escape attempt was foiled by the nosy, bothersome homonculous, Zeek. When Zaron imbibed the potion that would transform him into a lich, Paxzux saw his chance to escape and spread evil throughout the world—an important cause that he always felt Zaron neglected.

Because Zeek replaced him as Zaron's servant and messenger, Paxzux hates the homonculous and tries to kill the creature at every opportunity, but Zeek always seems to escape. The imp knows that when Zaron returns, the homonculous will tell him of everything that has occurred, including the imp's treachery. However, if the homonculous were slain, Zaron would know nothing. The PCs may very well be witness to a fight between Paxzux and Zeek at the forest's edge.

Although Paxzux always attacks the homonculous on sight, Zeek does nothing to invite these attacks and would rather flee than battle the imp. Zeek's main interest is to watch everything that happens so he can report to Zaron when he awakens.

Zeek attempts to thwart the imp's designs whenever possible. As described in the "Adventure Timeline," in order to expose the imp's machinations and bring about his downfall, Zeek must lure the PCs to a meeting between Paxzux and the Lord Mayor.

Paxzux confers his magic resistance to Zaron when within a one-mile radius of the mage. The imp is able to *polymorph* at will into a goat or a raven, but it prefers the goat form. Paxzux can use his innate power of *suggestion* to control the actions of those he meets. He is immune to cold, fire, and electricity, and he can be hit only by silver or magical weapons. He regenerates 1 hp/round. When in his lair, Paxzux always keeps a *wand of fear* nearby to use against intruders; the wand has 17 charges.

The south end of the chamber is piled with heavy carpets and many large soft pillows. Bowls of silver and carved oak are filled with an assortment of local fruits, nuts, and sweet breads (two silver bowls worth 10 gp each). A wool blanket has been draped over an iron-bound chest, both to hide the chest and to serve as a table. The chest contains 5 ep, 115 gp, 40 sp, 240 cp, a *chime of opening*, and a *ring of spell storing* containing the following spells: *wraithform*, *disintegrate*, and *passwall*. There is a keg of ale and a barrel of wine, along with barrels and sacks of bread, dried meat, and fruit.

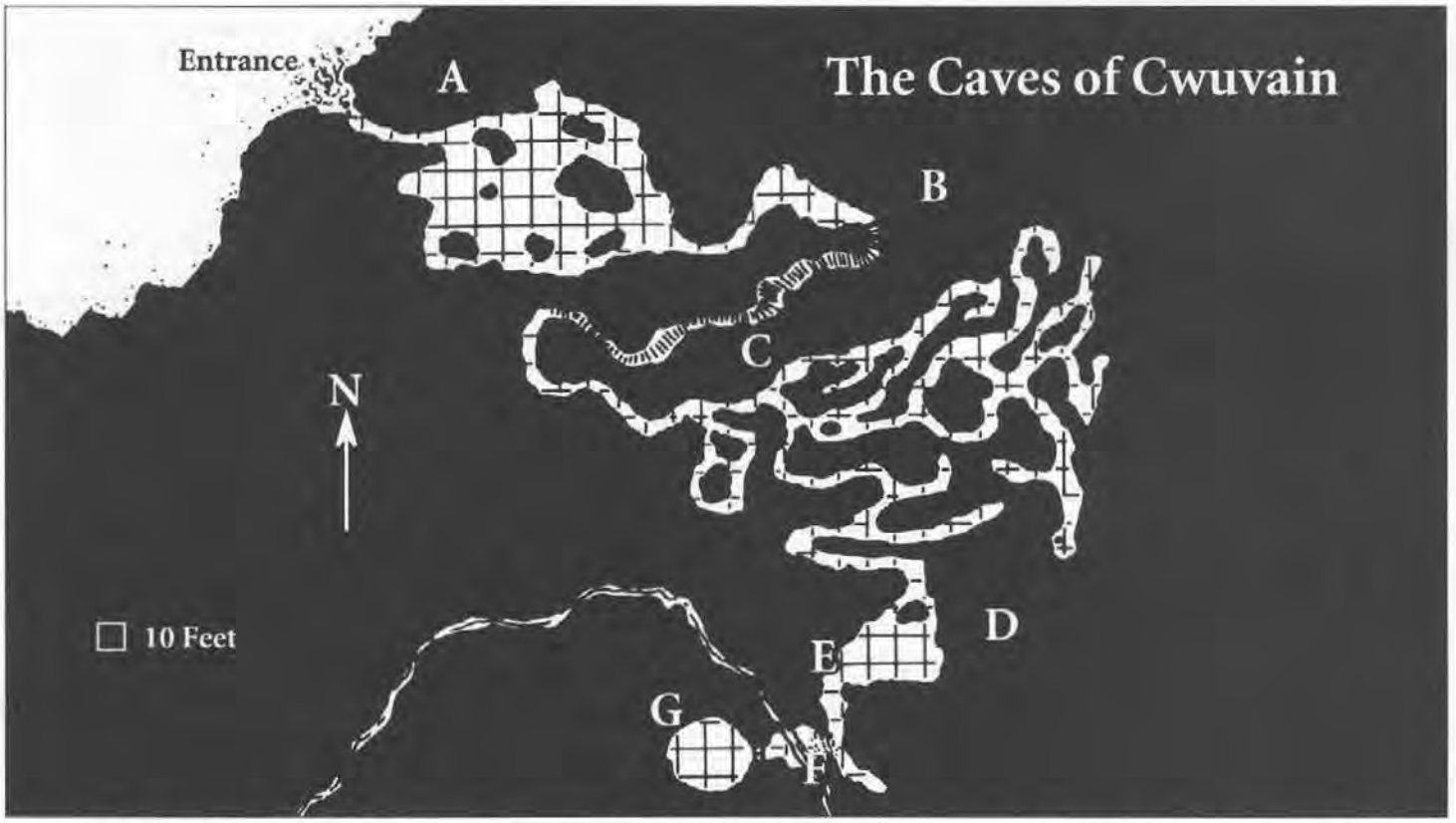
One of the barrels is actually a mimic. Before Paxzux found them here, the doppleganger and the mimic worked together for mutual survival, luring forest creatures and hapless travelers to their deaths. Now the mimic guards the doppleganger's treasure in exchange for food. The real Corwyn Helg was fed to the mimic when the doppleganger took his place.

Mimic: INT average; AL N; AC 7; MV 3; HD 7; hp 42; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3–12 (smash); SA glue; SD camouflage; SZ L; ML 15; XP 975; *MM*/250.

Anyone who touches a mimic is held fast by glue excreted from its body; a single Open Doors roll is allowed to attempt to break free. If defeated, the mimic is willing to trade treasure, service, and/or information in exchange for its life. It cooperates only with the doppleganger and the imp because they feed it regularly.

8E. The Windy Passage. This is the source of the ever-present moaning which fills these caverns. Along the west wall are three large cracks. A stiff breeze blows through them, making the eerie moaning noise. The breeze is cool and somewhat moist, as is evident by the quantity of lichens and fungi growing on the walls here.

Dwarves have their usual chance to detect that the west wall of the passage



is false and can be moved (pushed back). Otherwise, PCs have the standard chance of detecting a secret door here.

8F. The Stream.

> Under steady pressure, the wall slides back, and with a last gasp the moaning stops. Beyond the wall is a small cave. A swift stream flows from a fissure in one wall through a crack in another. A brisk wind blows from the crack into which the stream flows. In the opposite wall is a heavy door, its iron bands are carved with mystical runes.

The stream is only 2' deep at its middle, but the water is icy cold. Careful examination of the door reveals that it is sealed with lead. The runes are a warning to keep out. The door is locked, but no lock is apparent. (The door was built to lock automatically upon closing because the elves never intended it to be opened again.) Therefore, the lock cannot be picked. It must be opened using a *knock* spell or *chime of opening*.

8G. The Tomb of Cwuvain. Beyond the iron-bound door is the final resting place of the warrior-princess Cwuvain. The elves who defeated her sealed and hid this area so that no one would enter and unleash her spirit upon the world.

> Beyond the door is a sepulchre studded with growths of glimmering crystals. It resembles the inside of a geode, only many times larger and more magnificent. In the center of the chamber lies the remains of a warrior, its bones sheathed in rusted armor, its skull cloven by a bronze axe turned green with verdigris. Near its outstretched hand lies a wooden staff untouched by the ravages of time.
>
> A pale mist floats above the bones. As you watch, it begins to coalesce into a humanoid shape. The face of a beautiful elf-maiden materializes, but the face is twisted with an evil and undying hatred for all living things. Spectral hands reach toward you on ghostly arms; cold fingers scrabble at the air as the apparition advances, floating upon the chill air.

This is the banshee of Cwuvain. Unless the PCs act quickly, she wails (if at night); otherwise, she attacks them without mercy.

Banshee: INT exceptional; AL CE; AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 43; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA death wail; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 50%; ML 13; XP 4,000; *MM*/13.

Luckily for the PCs, Cwuvain is noncorporeal and can no longer use her magical *staff of cursing*. This *staff* can *cause disease, cause blindness, cause serious wounds,* or *bestow curse* each once/day on any humanoid. The cost is one charge per use. Only evil priests and wizards can employ this staff. In addition to its spell powers, the staff has a powerful self-defense mechanism. Any good-aligned PC who touches the staff must save vs. rod, staff, or wand. Those who succeed automatically suffer 1–10 hp damage. Those who fail take double damage. If a good-aligned priest fails his saving throw, he suffers no damage; instead he experiences an instant shift to a comparable evil alignment. This alignment shift can be reversed only by a *limited wish, restoration* or *wish* spell. True neutral PCs suffer neither the damage nor the alignment shift, nor can they employ any of the staff's powers.

The banshee of Cwuvain could not escape this chamber because of the

spells which sealed the door. If the PCs open it, the spells are destroyed and she may escape. Other than her magical staff, Cwuvain has no other treasure. Her armor is rusted and beyond repair, as are her sword and other items. The rumors of her treasure are false.

Concluding the Adventure

The adventure ends officially on the morning of the fourth day, when Zaron arises. When he exits his dome, he deals with unresolved conflicts in the following ways.

If anyone is still in jail, he orders their release. The constables obey him. Anyone about to be hanged is pardoned. If the PCs have attempted in any way to disturb or destroy Zaron while he underwent his transformation, or if they have destroyed some or all of his larvae, Zaron learns of their acts from the homonculous (unless it is dead), and he is not be pleased. He casts a *contagion* spell on the lot of them, followed by *polymorph other, bestow curse,* and finally *feeblemind.* He casts spells until everyone has been affected by something; in other words, if everyone fell victim to the *contagion,* he would cease his attacks. On the other hand, if the PCs did whatever they could to thwart the imp, either purposefully or accidentally, Zaron acts indifferently toward them. He summons the imp and forces it to reveal its true form. If the Scarlet Knight witnesses the imp in its true form, he is devastated. Zaron then takes his imp and his homonculous and returns to the dome to resume his life (or unlife, as the case is) of magical research.

Anyone with fewer than 5 HD or levels must save vs. spell at the sight of a lich or flee in terror for 5–20 rounds. That means that nearly everyone who might be witness to Zaron's rising turns tail and runs. Assume that any constables or less important NPCs automatically fail their saving throws, leaving only the Scarlet Knight, Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg, and the PCs to face the awakened lich.

The Scarlet Knight cannot simply allow Zaron to resume his lordship of Bechlaughter. Honor demands that he battle the lich. The PCs may choose to help him, or they may simply flee. In any case, the battle between Zaron and the Scarlet Knight should be role-played or, at the very least, described. Sir Faegyn has little chance of defeating Zaron without assistance.

Alternatively, the PCs may have destroyed Zaron before he arose, in which case none of the above occurs. Or, the PCs may have destroyed Zaron's body without destroying his phylactery. In this situation, Zaron's undead spirit must find a new host, inhabiting one of the zombies protecting the phylactery (or the closest dead body, should his phylactery have been moved). He then hunts down the PCs, not only to kill them, but also to retrieve his spellbooks. In this form, Zaron has all the powers of a lich, but he cannot cast spells.

On the morning of the fourth day, Zaron may find the PCs exploring his dome, in which case he treats them exactly as he would treat any other burglars. The DM is free to pick and choose among the many possible combinations of endings.

If at any point in the adventure the Scarlet Knight learns of the true nature of the imp, he blames himself for the needless suffering of all the innocent people injured and slain by his hand. He vows to change his ways. He sells all his possessions, donates the proceeds to a worthy (non-PC) charity, and promises to spend the remainder of his life performing penance. This is a good opportunity for the PCs to pick up some equipment cheap, but Faegyn does not sell the Scarlet Sword. He chooses the most worthy PC—the one who has most nobly represented the values of lawfulness and goodness—and gives him the sword. If there are no likely candidates for this award, he keeps the sword until he can find someone worthy to carry it.

Award experience points for each secret the PCs discover and expose. For instance, award 1,000 XP per PC for discovering the true nature of Lord Mayor Corwyn Helg, 1,000 XP for revealing the imp to the Scarlet Knight, and 1,000 XP for discovering the entrance to and exploring the Dome of the Mage. If they find and destroy Zaron before he rises (including his phylactery), award experience points as if the PCs had actually slain the lich. The DM might also consider awarding 1,000 XP for finding and exploring the lost tomb of Cwuvain. Ω

SOME THINGS ARE MEANT TO BE CLOSED

YOUR MIND ISN'T ONE OF THEM.

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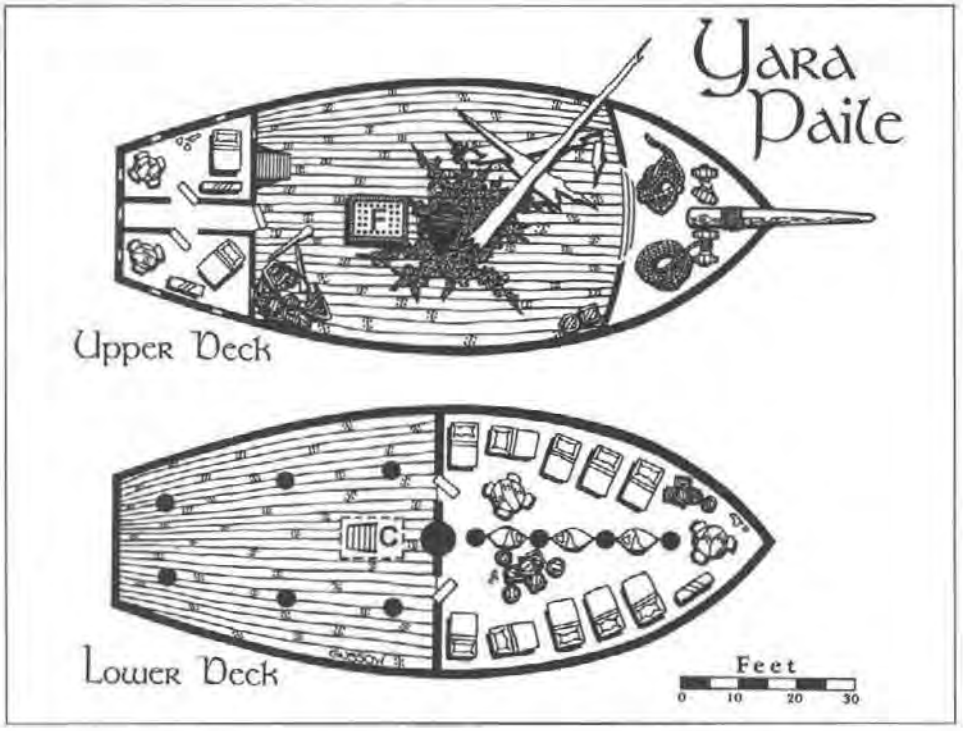
Side Treks



BY JOHN W. BAICHTAL

Cartography by Michael Gussow

"Flotsam" is an AD&D® game SideTrek for 4–6 characters of levels 6–8 (about 35 total levels). The PCs should have their own vessel, preferably a smaller sailing ship.

For the Player Characters

It is autumn on the high seas, and you are traveling by ship along the edge of a pirate-infested archipelago. The tedium of the voyage is broken when a crewman spots the ruins of a sailing ship, her hull scorched by fire and her mast shattered. On the deck are two figures, signaling you frantically with waving arms.

If the PCs approach to communicate with the survivors, the elder of the two, an old man dressed in dilapidated clothes of clashing colors, asks permission to come over to speak. With him is a rather attractive middle-aged woman dressed like a noble lady. If the PCs allow the two to come on board, the old man tells his story:

"Greetings, gentlefolk. Ebeneezer here! Glad you stopped by. That ship was starting to get positively tomblike after three days! Terrible battle. How I detest pirates!

"I am a merchant out of Waterdeep, a trader in rare textiles and dyes. I was traveling the seas, trading my wares, when a black-painted pirate ship slipped out of a fog bank three days ago and attacked. I hid Myriama in the bilges and grabbed a cutlass to do battle, and while fencing with the sea-scum somebody knocked me over the head. When I awoke, we were all alone except for the bodies of my crewmen.

"I ask you, good people, to allow myself and Myriama passage to the nearest port."

For the Dungeon Master

In actuality, Ebeneezer is a pirate himself: the old man was the chief mage of the pirate ship *Yara Paile,* and he accidentally *fireballed* his own side during a recent attack on a merchant vessel, killing half his crewmates. Despite this misfortune, the pirates (who do not appear in this adventure) eventually won. As punishment for his mistake, Ebeneezer was marooned on the pirate ship's wreckage, and the pirates took the ship they had attacked. For her part, Myriama (the woman) is a rakshasa, an ally of Ebeneezer's. Her disguise ability was seen through by the pirate leader, and he never trusted her. Consequently, when he marooned the old man, he dumped her as well.

The party has a chance to realize Ebeneezer and Myriama's sinister natures. There are a number of clues to be found on the damaged ship: the name of the ship, painted on the side, was burned off when the *fireball* hit. If asked, Ebeneezer says it is the *Mayfly.* However, if the prow of the ship is examined closely, the name—*Yara Paile*—can be discerned. A character knowledgeable about pirates can identify the name as belonging to an infamous female buccaneer of about 20 years ago, known for particularly brutal treatment of the crews of ships she captured. The party should think it rather odd that a merchant would have a ship named after such a figure.

Ebeneezer is wholly ignorant of textiles, so a knowledgeable party may catch him there. However, he can weave very convincing and smooth lies at the drop of a hat, so a party ignorant of the subject cannot stymie him with snap questions on dyes and textiles.

The hold of the ship contains a great deal of rusty residue, the remnants of some pig iron the pirates had stolen a while back. Other than that, the hold contains nothing but cobwebs. There is no evidence to support Ebeneezer's claim that he was hauling bolts of cloth and kegs of dye.

In the room marked "Mate's Cabin" on the *Yara Paile* there is a dagger of the style used by pirates (curved, no

crossguard, cheap scrimshaw hilt) under the bunk. Scratched into the blade is the name "Tobirandos." This is a relatively well-known pirate, and any character that has had any exposure to pirates and their culture can make that identification, if an Intelligence check at –4 is rolled.

Carved into the wall in the area marked "Captain's Cabin" on the map is the name Taazlo. As with the dagger, any character who makes an Intelligence check at –2 knows this person is a notorious pirate.

If the characters ask how the ship was burned, Ebeneezer says that the pirates used a catapult to hurl a flaming oil bomb. A wizard who examines the burns may make an Intelligence check to realize that they were caused by a *fireball* or other flame spell—the damage bears the characteristics of a explosion of great heat, not a slow-burning oil fire.

A character who has dealt with pirates extensively may remember hearing of a wizard named Ebeneezer who worked for the captain of the *Yara Paile.* This revelation requires an Intelligence check at –2.

The Villains

Ebeneezer is not evil or cruel, just self-centered and a little batty, though not as much as he pretends. The DM should play Ebeneezer as a kindly but goofy old man, constantly forgetting things, cracking stupid jokes and asking silly questions. He is also a particularly lousy dresser, unashamedly wearing clashing colors and mismatched socks. Examples of his nutty behavior:

❖ He comes out of his cabin wearing all his clothes backward and acts surprised when asked about it.

❖ He puts on a cat mask and crawls around on all fours meowing and scratching the furniture.

❖ He tells an endless series of knock-knock jokes. When people become annoyed, he asks them, "How many orcs does it take to light a candle?" (A hundred and one—a hundred to sack a town and the last to light the candle on the burning ruins).

❖ He sings loudly and off-key, ignoring critics and requests to be silent, until threatened with bodily harm.

❖ He puts on a hobgoblin mask and starts talking like one ("Me want raw meat, not this stinking sea biscuit!")

❖ He puts on his eagle-winged mask and pretends to fly around the ship.

Ebeneezer Suril: AL CN; AC 4; MV 12; W10; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 11, C 12, I 16, W 13, Ch 14; ML 14; XP 5,000; *bracers of defense AC 6, cloak of the bat, knife +1, necklace of adaptation,* sack with assorted costume masks; Spells: *jump, charm person, color spray, wall of fog; Melf's acid arrow, alter self, ESP, levitate; flame arrow, slow, dispel magic; wall of fire, minor globe of invulnerability, Evard's black tentacles; cloudkill, cone of cold.* Suril's spellbook is with the pirates, so any spells he casts cannot be recovered.

Myriama is a refugee from the harem of a rakshasa maharaja. Unwilling to follow the strictures that her caste assigned her, she lit out on her own and is currently pretending to be a noble woman. She appears as a lady of high birth, reduced to poverty but still possessed of her dignity and nobility. She looks about 40 years old and has blue eyes, long red hair, and sunburnt, pale skin. Her dress is tattered but still fine, and rather incongruously she wears a savage's necklace of amber beads whose central pendant is a wooden figurine of a woman.

Myriama is a relatively loyal comrade to Ebeneezer, particularly since he is totally fooled by her disguise. He is convinced she is merely a mage of low level and often gives her magic lessons and fatherly advice. The rakshasa corroborates every aspect of Ebeneezer's story and can lie easily and convincingly.

Myriama isn't hanging around Ebeneezer for nothing. She has learned of a huge gem called the Fist of Poseidon which is located somewhere in the archipelago. The rakshasa is prepared to do anything to recover it, but she realizes that her best bet is to work through trickery and subtlety. Thus she associates with Ebeneezer, a foolish but powerful wizard.

Myriama (rakshasa): AL LE; AC –4; MV 15; HD 7; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d4+1; SA spells, illusion; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to spells of 7th level and lower; SZ M; ML 16; XP 3,000; *MM*/299. Equipment: fan, parasol, book of prayers to a Lawful Good deity; Spells: *magic missile, burning hands, phantasmal force; levitate, ray of enfeeblement.* These spells are cast at 7th level.

Myriama's doll-necklace is magical. When the command word is spoken, the doll grows into a full-sized golem resembling a ship's figurehead, called a wooden lady. The golem attacks with its fists, doing tremendous damage; wooden ladies have a Strength equivalent to 18/00. Fire causes normal damage, though if they are burned, these golems give off a thick black smoke to a radius of 1' per hp damage sustained. Cold spells have no effect. *Plant growth* spells heal 1d4 hp damage per level of the caster.

The Wooden Lady: AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 8; hp 60; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+6/1d10+6; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, no damage from piercing weapons, half damage from blunt weapons, regenerate 1 hp per hour; ML 20; XP 4,000.

Conclusion

The party may very well be suspicious of the two, but with Ebeneezer's goofiness and Myriama's cunning, it is tough to justify any hostile acts against them. Ebeneezer and Myriama attack the party only if their disguise is blown or if offered a truly tempting opportunity to make a lot of money.

One thing to remember is that Myriama will be continually vigilant toward clues leading her to the Fist of Poseidon. She will try to manipulate the party into doing most of the work toward finding the gem, only to betray them and have it all to herself. Ω

THE ICE TYRANT

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

Dragon orbs

Artwork by Rebecca Guay
Cartography by Chris Perkins

Chris writes: "I want to thank Sue Weinlein Cook for reading the first draft of this adventure and making sure everything I wrote was consistent with the DRAGONLANCE® line of products. Evidently, nothing happens on Krynn without Sue knowing about it!"

"The Ice Tyrant" is a DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ adventure set in Southern Ergoth, the domain of Gellidus the white dragon. This scenario takes the heroes from a coldswept refuge of the Silvanesti elves to the citadel of Anghanor, left untouched since the Knights of Takhisis' withdrawal in 383 A.C. (just before the Second Cataclysm). The once-familiar locales of Ergoth have changed since the War of the Lance. Now, in the Age of Mortals, most of Southern Ergoth is covered by a great glacier, and the capital city of Daltigoth has fallen to ogres loyal to the brutal dragon overlord Gellidus (known to humans as Frost).

Like all FIFTH AGE adventures, "The Ice Tyrant" is divided into acts and scenes. As the heroes make choices and attempt actions, they progress from one scene to the next within each act. The adventure focuses on storytelling and dramatic roleplaying.

The adventure begins when the heroes join a band of Silvanesti renegades who have successfully evaded Gellidus' clutches. The elves plan to strike back at the cruel Ice Tyrant by uncovering his "secret" in Anghanor. Within the guarded keep, Gellidus has hidden several unhatched dragon eggs from three female white dragons (Shiver, Icicle, and Wintergale). As father to these would-be wyrmlings, Gellidus plans to raise them as an elite combat squadron, using them to lay waste to the remaining elven dissidents living within his frigid domain. The Silvanesti, upon discovering the truth, endeavor to foil Gellidus' ambitions by destroying the eggs before they hatch.

In Act One, the heroes encounter a band of Silvanesti renegades whose home has been laid to waste by the harsh winter, the great glacier, and Gellidus. The elves lead the heroes across Southern Ergoth's frigid terrain toward the keep of Anghanor to determine why Gellidus is so concerned with guarding it against outsiders.

In Act Two, the heroes and their Silvanesti allies meet Firestorm, son of the legendary ogre chieftain Tdarnk.

The half-ogre and his henchmen are trudging through the blistering cold Last Gaard mountains, returning to Daltigoth with several captured Kagonesti elves. The heroes help free the elves from Firestorm's grasp and encounter a mysterious white stag that leads them toward a forlorn tower.

In Act Three, the heroes approach Anghanor and must overcome Gellidus' thanoi (walrus men) and the dragon Wintergale. The keep that once protected the Knights of Takhisis now contains Gellidus' secret brood of dragon eggs. By destroying the eggs, the Silvanesti hope to loosen the Ice Tyrant's grip on their domain.

Note: The FIFTH AGE game is not an AD&D® game supplement. It is a game unto itself. It employs no dice, relying instead upon the unique and easy-to-use SAGA™ card system (the Fate Deck) to resolve actions.

For DMs who use AD&D game rules to run their FIFTH AGE campaigns, "The Ice Tyrant" includes notes and statistics allowing DMs to adapt the adventure for regular AD&D game play.

> Optional AD&D game material has been set aside in shaded boxes for easy reference. If used as an AD&D adventure, "The Ice Tyrant" works best with 4–6 PCs of levels 5–7 (about 30 total levels). The module takes place following the War of the Lance.

Act One: Endless Winter

Scene One: The Warm Fire

This scene places the heroes in the wilderness of Southern Ergoth, near the Thon-Sorpon River north of Silvamori. The adventure assumes that the heroes know each other and have journeyed to Southern Ergoth to find solace (of which there is none) or help the Silvanesti defend their conquered homeland. The latter hook is especially appropriate if one of the heroes happens to be an elf (Qualinesti, Kagonesti, or Silvanesti).

Overview

While huddled around a campfire on a cold winter's morn, the heroes are approached by a group of Silvanesti, two of whom are injured as the result of an ice bear attack.

Southern Ergoth

Getting Started

Before starting, the Narrator should make sure every player has a hero sheet and the correct number of cards in his hand. For details on hero cards and sheets, refer to Book One of the FIFTH AGE game.

First Impressions

The Narrator should inform players that their heroes are journeying toward Silvamori, an enclave founded less than a century ago by elven refugees from Silvanesti during the War of the Lance. The heroes must determine whether there are elves still residing there. The morning is bitter cold, and a blizzard the night before has covered the land with several feet of snow. The heroes are probably deciding how they plan to cross the Thon-Sorpon River when their fireside conversation is interrupted by the arrival of several strangers.

> Seven figures rise above a distant crest of blowing snow, their human-like forms clothed in white furs. They shuffle toward your camp, their faces hidden under thick woolen cowls. Two of the figures appear tired or injured, for they are leaning heavily upon their comrades as they near the encampment. Some of the strangers are using long bows to help them ply through the heavy blanket of snow.

The seven figures are Silvanesti renegades led by Arkaryn, a half-Silvanesti, half-Kagonesti elf whose gathering was destroyed by the Ice Tyrant's ogre huntsmen nine months ago. The others are survivors of various massacres or refugees who fled Daltigoth. Arkaryn and his fellow elves have struck several times into Gellidus' territory, stealing food from ogre encampments, fighting Gellidus' thanoi marauders, destroying caravans, and snatching anything to hamper the Ice Tyrant's ability to sustain forces in the vast desolation of Southern Ergoth.

The Story Begins

When the elven renegades approach the heroes' camp, it is clear that two of them are injured. Arkaryn steps forward and draws back his cowl to reveal his elven nature. He surreptitiously slides his right hand into the folds of his fur cloak and grasps the pommel of his long sword, then addresses the heroes:

> The leader of the elves steps forward resolutely, his eyes flickering with determination. "The endless winter has taken its toll upon my elves. Surrender your fire, or by the lost gods I shall take it."

Arkaryn is content to share the fire with the heroes, but he does not allow the heroes to turn him away. Although weary, Arkaryn has grown accustomed to responding with the point of his sword and fights, if necessary, to steal the heroes' crackling campfire. If the heroes heartily agree to share their fire and offer to tend to the injured Silvanesti, Arkaryn's suspicions gradually fade.

The Silvanesti are generally aloof and arrogant, but these renegades have cast off their haughtiness and devoted themselves entirely to freeing their domain from Gellidus' tyranny. The one exception is Krystalas, a Silvanesti male whose father was brutalized by human barbarians. Krystalas regards humans with nearly as much contempt as he does draconians; he can be a foil for Arkaryn, mistrusting the heroes at every turn until one of them impresses him. Because of this mistrust, any action intended to impress Krystalas (see "Actions") should be one degree more difficult (a challenging action becomes daunting, for instance).

The elves have formed unusual alliances in the past and are not likely to dismiss other potential allies based on race. Given an opportunity, Arkaryn recounts his group's recent encounter with an ice bear. When he learns that the heroes are headed for Silvamori, the morose elf lapses into a sobering tale about the struggling Silvanesti enclave:

> "Gellidus has driven many of our people out of Silvamori, forcing them to take sanctuary along the western coast. The Ice Tyrant holds most of Southern Ergoth in his clutches. Ogres stalk the lands around Daltigoth, while the Tyrant's dragon consorts scour the mountains and forests for Silvanesti incursors. Despite their efforts, we have killed many, and someday Gellidus himself will regret the evils he has wrought upon our people. The endless winter will yield before long."

Arkaryn's hatred of Gellidus is thinly veiled; however, he believes he can bring about the Ice Tyrant's downfall by destroying key targets within his domain. If the heroes ask what Arkaryn means by his last statement, the elf acts reluctant to divulge what he knows. A female Silvanesti named Mirinth (one of the injured elves) encourages Arkaryn to trust the heroes enough to share what he knows:

> "Beyond the mountains to the north lies the desolated keep of Anghanor. In the Time of Darkness, elven heroes and the Knights of Solamnia used the keep as a refuge against the Dragonarmies. In the Summer of Chaos, the Knights of Takhisis took the keep but later abandoned it. Now Gellidus uses the citadel for some darker purpose. The Ice Tyrant has sent tusked monsters to guard Anghanor. Also, we have heard from Daltigoth that Gellidus has hidden an artifact of great power in the hollow chambers beneath the citadel—something that will ensure his conquest of all of Southern Ergoth. He has set one of his dragon consorts to guard it."
>
> "We are searching for other Silvanesti to help us reach Anghanor, cut through the Ice Tyrant's defenses, and steal the artifact from Gellidus' clutches. We have seen no one this side of the mountains, and our search has only taken us farther from the keep and the Ice Tyrant's secret."

If the heroes are truly heroic, they will offer to help these Silvanesti renegades reach Anghanor. If the heroes decline to partake in Arkaryn's quest, the Silvanesti are shamed by the heroes' cowardice and stand around the embers of the fire long enough to warm their palms and faces before heading westward in search of aid.

Actions

The heroes might try to do something before the elves reach the camp, such as hide behind the nearby trees or under a layer of snow (see **Hide**). Once the elves appear, the heroes may also try to outflank them by skirting around the perimeter of the encampment (see **Outflank the Elves**). Even though the elves are fatigued, they have keen senses and may oppose either action. If the heroes refrain from aggressive action and wait for the elves to arrive, they may try to **Impress the Elves** or heal the injured.

The two injured elves (Xar-Talien and Mirinth) have wounds consistent with an ice bear attack. The battle occurred more than a day ago, and the elves have been walking ever since. As a result, it is too late to administer first aid. Only healing magic can help them now. (See Chapter Five: Magic in the first book of the FIFTH AGE rules pages 73–78.) Healing restores some or all of the elves' lost Endurance points. Both elves have lost four Endurance points (each has two points remaining).

If conflict erupts between the heroes and the Silvanesti, the Narrator can forestall combat by having one of Gellidus' consorts fly overhead. The sight of the huge white dragon causes Arkaryn to break off his aggression and move his elves into a sheltered, snowy area where their white furs and natural hiding abilities provide sufficient camouflage. The mere sight of the dragon causes the heroes to attempt an easy Spirit action to avoid succumbing to dragonawe. (See page 115 in Book One of the FIFTH AGE rules.) If they are successful, the heroes may try to conceal themselves as well (see **Hide** below), but the dragon is not looking in their direction and does not spot them regardless. Once the dragon has flown off, the elves begin leaving the area immediately, advising the heroes to do the same. The heroes may use this opportunity to mend the situation by offering to aid the elves.

❖ Hide
Difficulty: Average (8)
Action ability: Dexterity
Opposition ability: None

Comments: If a hero successfully hides from the elves, he can observe them from a safe location. The elves are wearing chain mail under their furs, and those who are not injured have their hands on weapons concealed in the folds of their apparel, but they do not attack unless provoked. The elves continue to ignore the hidden hero until he reveals himself. A hero declaring this action may also attempt to hide from the passing white dragon (see "Actions" above).

Mishap: A mishap for this action indicates that the elves are aware of the hero's presence. Moreover, while trying to hide, the hero stumbles and a dump of slushy snow falls on him, making him uncomfortable and susceptible to frostbite unless he dries by the campfire for at least one hour. Regardless of the mishap, no botched hiding attempt catches the eye of the passing dragon.

❖ Outflank the Elves
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action ability: Dexterity
Opposition ability: Perception

Comments: If a hero successfully outflanks the elves, he can move to a point along the elves' rear or flank and attempt to gain surprise in a combat situation (a challenging Agility (Perception) action). Arkaryn's keen hearing makes surprising the elves a difficult action at best.

Mishap: A mishap for this action indicates that the elves are aware of the hero's maneuver. They regard such an action as hostile and draw their bows and swords, threatening to attack the party unless the heroes can diffuse the situation (an average Presence (Reason) action).

❖ Impress the Elves
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action ability: Presence
Opposition ability: None

Comments: If the heroes offer to share their fire and heal the injured elves (see below), Arkaryn sheds his mistrust and treats them with respect. However, impressing the elves requires that the heroes tell stories of their deeds around the fire, acknowledge the plight of the Silvanesti, and agree to help Arkaryn fight the Ice Tyrant Gellidus. This action requires a fair measure of roleplaying on the part of the players. If the players fail to undertake the task, this action's difficulty level should be bumped to Daunting (16).

Mishap: A mishap for this action indicates a failure and causes several of the elves (Krystalas in particular) to take a dislike to the heroes, which they may continue to exhibit throughout the adventure.

Characters

The seven Silvanesti are dressed in heavy clothing with white furs concealing their chain mail armor. Arkaryn is a champion of the Silvanesti people who wields *Icebane*, a magical long sword that inflicts an added +6 damage points to cold-based creatures such as white dragons, ice bears, ice trolls, and thanoi (walrus men). If Arkaryn dies at any time during this adventure, the next Silvanesti in line for the sword (Krystalas first, then Xar-Talien, followed by Xar-Toth, and the others) takes up the blade and wields it in Arkaryn's name.

Arkaryn: Silvanesti-Kagonesti male adult, serious demeanor, Champion. Ag 8C, Dx 8B, En 7C, St 7B, Re 5C, Pe 6B, Sp 6C, Pr 7B. Dmg +7 or +13 (long sword of renown), Def –3 (chain mail). Arkaryn has long, dark hair (a striking trait inherited from his Kagonesti mother) and a heavier build than others of his kind.

> **Arkaryn** (5th-level elf fighter): AL CG; AC 3; MV 12; F5; hp 45; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 3/2 (long sword); Dmg by weapon type +1 (strength); SA +1 to hit with bows; SD 90% resistant to charm-related magic; S 16 (+0/+1), D 16, C 15, I 16, W 12, Ch 15; ML 17; *MM*/108 (elf, variant); chain mail, *long sword +1*, +4 vs. cold-based creatures (no special abilities), short sword. Arkaryn has the bowyer/fletcher, direction sense, hunting, tracking and set snares proficiencies.

Six Silvanesti renegades: Silvanesti adults (four men, two women), distrustful demeanors, Adventurers. Co 7, Ph 6, In 5, Es 6. Dmg +7 (long sword), Def –3 (chain mail), also missile weapons (long bow/+6). These elves have survived in the icy wilderness for months and conducted many daring raids into the core of the Ice Tyrant's domain. The males are named Xar-Talien (injured), Xar-Toth, Aramyst, and Krystalas. The females are named Mirinth (injured) and Dariel.

> **Silvanesti renegades** (six 3rd-level elf fighters): AL CG; AC 4; MV 12; F3; hp 20 each (two elves are injured and have 5 hp remaining); THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1 (sword) or 2 (long bow); Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit with bows; SD 90% resistant to charm-related magic; D 15; ML 15; *MM*/108 (elf, variant); chain mail, long sword, long bow (3d4 arrows each), short sword. All six elves possess the bowyer/fletcher, hunting and tracking proficiencies.

Outcome

At the end of this scene, the heroes must decide whether they intend to join the Silvanesti in their perilous journey to Anghanor or decline the offer and continue toward Silvamori. If the heroes opt for the former, the adventure continues with Scene Two. If they choose the latter course, they eventually arrive in Silvamori, and the adventure is over.

If, for some reason, the heroes engage in combat with the Silvanesti, the elves fight to the death. If the Silvanesti are slain, the heroes may head to Silvamori (end of adventure) or fulfill Arkaryn's quest by journeying to the citadel of Anghanor.

Scene Two: Icebane Unsheathed!

This scene assumes the heroes have joined the Silvanesti in their quest to reach Anghanor. Gray clouds have formed in the distant, eastern sky. Arkaryn tells the heroes that a blizzard is heading in their direction, and it would be prudent to press on toward the northern mountains.

Overview

The heroes and their elven allies are attacked by ice trolls while traversing through the snowy woods toward the northern peaks. Ice trolls are 7' tall magical creatures seemingly carved from cold, transparent ice. The trolls are hungry for elven flesh and direct their attacks at the Silvanesti whenever possible.

Getting Started

Arkaryn leads the Silvanesti and the heroes across the harsh, glacial terrain. The normal movement rate across the winter landscape is roughly 16 miles per day (half that for smaller-than-man-sized heroes). If Mirinth and/or Xar-Talien is still injured (see Scene One), they can travel only 10 miles per day to account for their frequent rest periods.

> In AD&D terms, movement rates across the snowy terrain are cut by half. If the slowest character in the party has a normal movement rate of 6, the party's movement rate is reduced to 3 (assuming the faster PCs allow the slower ones to keep up). A forced march (see *PHB*/120) enables man-sized individuals to move 15 miles per day. Dwarves, halflings, and gnomes can march eight miles/day through the snow and ice.

First Impressions

> Arkaryn leads you and his fellow elves northward, plowing through the thick blanket of snow and leaving a trail of footprints for others to follow. You are told that bugbears have taken to hunting in this section of the wilderness, and the Silvanesti have learned to walk in straight lines to hide their numbers. And so you follow the path Arkaryn has left, acutely aware that the Silvanesti behind you are watching you closely.
>
> You find no comfort among the trees and hills of Southern Ergoth, for every inch of ground is smothered in white, and the wind cuts through your heavy clothing like a sword through snow. The storm clouds to the east grow more threatening with each passing minute. Looking ahead, you see that Arkaryn has navigated around several large snowdrifts to avoid slowing the pace of your march.

The Story Continues

Prior to the ice trolls attack, the Narrator should intensify the scene by drawing attention to Krystalas. If the elf was not impressed by the heroes in Scene One, he casts a suspicious gaze upon the hero he perceives as the most threatening and uses this icy stare to unsettle the hero. The Narrator should inform the player that his hero is being closely watched and scrutinized. (Krystalas remains in close proximity to the hero, either directly in front or behind.)

If the hero chooses to confront Krystalas, the elf does not back down. Keeping his hand on the hilt of his sword, Krystalas makes his feelings clear:

> "Your people are all alike!" Krystalas sneers. "Savage, uncivilized barbarians who would betray a companion for silver—or a rotting slab of meat! Be careful at whom you swing your sword, or you shall wield it no more."

Krystalas wants to provoke a fight, and Arkaryn is too far ahead to intercede. However, Krystalas does not strike first, drawing his weapon only when attacked. The situation between Krystalas and the hero has no time to escalate before the ice trolls rise from the nearby snowdrifts to attack them.

If a hero suspects that something may be hiding beneath a nearby snowdrift, he may attempt to Avoid Surprise (see "Actions" below). However, the player must state that his hero is watching the snowdrifts for hidden antagonists.

Once revealed, the ice trolls hurl spears of ice (one each) at the heroes and the Silvanesti. They cannot tell the elves from the humans until they enter close combat. After hurling their spears, the ice trolls fight with their sharp claws, attacking the Silvanesti until destroyed. The trolls regenerate 3 damage points per minute until slain. Regardless of the heroes' actions, Arkaryn draws forth *Icebane* and uses the sword to cut down the ice trolls. Once he enters combat, Arkaryn becomes the prime target of the trolls' attacks; at least two ice trolls try to attack him each round.

If two or more heroes or Silvanesti are slain and the ice trolls gain the upper hand, a searing flame suddenly springs from Arkaryn's magical sword. Icebane's fire cuts through the cold air and hits its mark, burning its way through an ice troll's torso and cleaving the monster in two. The sight causes the other ice trolls to flee in terror, affording Arkaryn and the heroes some much-needed respite.

The ice trolls also withdraw if their surviving members are outnumbered and clearly outmatched. If the heroes pursue them, the trolls turn about and fight to the death to keep the heroes from finding their lair. Krystalas pursues them, and any hero who comes to his aid (or rescue) may earn his friendship. (Refer to the Impress the Elves action in Scene One and consider it an average Dexterity action). Arkaryn and Krystalas should survive this encounter, but one of the other Silvanesti may not be as fortunate. The Narrator should keep as many of the Silvanesti alive as possible, but the loss of one or two characters may force the more light-hearted heroes to take their situation seriously. Arkaryn, who is accustomed to losing friends in battle, offers a brief prayer to the dead before moving on:

> The slashing wind catches Arkaryn's mane of hair as he stands above the dead elf slumped in the blood-spattered snow. Krystalas warns him of the impending storm, but Arkaryn seems oblivious to the warning. Gently, he touches the corpse with the tip of his sword. "No cold can diminish the fire in your heart," he says to the fallen Silvanesti. "May the spirits guide you to a warmer, brighter place." With that, he sheathes his sword, looks east toward the storm, and proceeds northward.

Atmosphere

The heroes are half-frozen from the cold. If they are unaccustomed to frigid climates, they have difficulty fighting in these conditions. Stiff limbs, icy weapons, and unstable footing make fighting the trolls precarious and unpleasant. The Narrator should draw attention to these "small things" as the battle wages. In terms of game play, the Narrator may increase the difficulty rating of any physical action by one degree (for example, from average to challenging).

Actions

The heroes have a chance to Avoid Surprise by watching the snowdrifts for signs of life. This average Perception (Agility) action is detailed in the FIFTH AGE boxed set, Book One, page 60. Success indicates that the heroes have sensed the presence of the ice trolls, either by noticing slight shifts in the snow or by spotting pairs of icy eyes set in the drifts themselves. A mishap indicates that the ice trolls surprise the heroes, gaining one free attack (hurl spears) before the heroes can draw their weapons.

Once combat erupts, most of the heroes' actions involve battling the

trolls. Heroes may withdraw from the fighting ground without fear of pursuit, as the ice trolls seem focused on fighting the elves. They may also attempt to Outflank the trolls. Once the battle is concluded, the heroes can offer first aid (average Dexterity action) and heal the wounds of the injured (difficulty varies).

Successfully offering first aid restores one card to the hand of a player with an injured hero. If this card restores the player's Hand of Fate to its full size, the hero has been fully healed. A hero can give first aid to himself (as above) or to a Silvanesti—the latter by flipping over the top card of the Fate Deck and restoring to the elf a number of points equal to its value. An individual can receive only one single attempt at first aid, immediately following a fight in which the individual lost one card or suffered damage. The difficulty rating and effect of healing spells depends on the invocation time and desired area of effect. See Chapter Five in the first book of the FIFTH AGE rules (pages 73–78).

❖ Outflank the Trolls

Difficulty: Average (8)
Action ability: Dexterity
Opposition ability: Perception

Comments: If the heroes are successful, they can attack the trolls from a favorable position, making personal, melee, and missile attacks one degree easier for the initial exchange of blows.

Mishap: The maneuver not only fails, but the ice trolls become aware of the heroes' attempt to outflank them. They may choose to break off their attack on the Silvanesti to attack the heroes instead, if the heroes are within range.

Characters

Six ice trolls: Monsters. Co 5, Ph 12, In 4, Es 7, Dmg +6, Def –4, also missile weapons (ice spear/+5), immune to cold, regenerate. Blunt weapons inflict one point of damage per hit.

Ice trolls (6): INT average; AL CE; AC 8; MV 9; HD 2; hp 15 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d8/1d8 or 1d6+4 (ice spear); SA +4 damage bonus with weapons; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; blunt weapons inflict +1 damage; immune to cold-base attacks; fire-based attacks inflict double damage; regenerate 2 hp/round; SZ L (8' tall); ML 11; XP 270; *MM*/349. Ice trolls cannot regenerate damage caused by fire or acid.

Outcome

If the heroes follow Arkaryn and continue their northward trek, proceed with Scene Three. Anyone who remains at this site for longer than four hours is hit by the blizzard from the east. Heroes struck by the storm must seek shelter and warmth (average Perception action). If they cannot find adequate shelter or warmth, each hero must discard one card from his hand to account for the toll the storm has taken. The blizzard obliterates Arkaryn's trail and buries any evidence of the battle with the ice trolls.

In AD&D terms, surviving the blizzard requires a successful fire-building, survival (arctic or woodland) and foraging proficiency check. A failed check indicates that a fire could not be maintained, a suitable shelter could not be secured, or foraged food could not be provided. PCs who fail to construct an adequate shelter or build a warm fire must make a system shock roll to resist the blizzard's effects; success indicates 2d6–1 hp cold damage, and failure indicates 4d6+2 hp cold damage.

Scene Three: Cold Death

The heroes reach the foothills of the Last Gaard mountains, but the blizzard from the east has descended upon them. Arkaryn claims to know of an abandoned elven feasthall hidden in the woods nearby and leads the heroes there to find shelter. For a time, bugbear hunters laid claim to the Lodge—until they realized the feasthall was haunted and decided to take their chances in the cold.

Overview

The old elven feasthall, referred to as the Lodge, was built by Kagonesti elves several years prior to the Ice Tyrant's arrival. Made from the thickest timbers in Southern Ergoth, the Lodge once served as a refuge for elven and human exiles during the great Dragon Purge. Later, when Gellidus first arrived, it was used as a safe haven for Silvanesti raiders not unlike Arkaryn's renegades. For the last 10 years, it has been haunted by the banshee of a Kagonesti elf named Talasia.

Getting Started

Before proceeding, the Narrator may wish to review the information on banshees in Book One (Chapter Six) of the FIFTH AGE rules.

First Impressions

The heroes and the Silvanesti have been trudging through waist-high snow for much of the day, and darkness is creeping upon them. The Lodge provides the only safe shelter from the blizzard, and characters with injuries would doubtless appreciate the evening's respite.

Read the following to the players when the heroes and their Silvanesti allies arrive within sight of the Lodge:

> Hidden behind the tangled crowns of Southern Ergoth's leafless trees is an impressive wooden structure with bulging sides and a steep, angular roofline. The roof has sustained minor damage from the thrashing winds, and broken tree limbs have punctured the roof in one or two places. Despite the apparent damage, the building looks secure. A heavy set of wooden doors are set into one end of the hundred-foot-long hall. Embedded in the snow near the entrance are several longspears mounted with the frozen heads of foolish trespassers, most of them elven and human.

The Story Continues

Arkaryn and his renegades have not visited the hall before, but they know of its existence from other Silvanesti. The feasthall has thick wooden walls and a frozen dirt floor. In addition to the main entrance, there is a secret door at the rear of the structure. The heads mounted on the spears outside the hall were placed here as warning markers by the bugbears; however, there is no indication that the bugbears continue to inhabit the structure. A careful search of the interior reveals some abandoned weaponry (spears and shields mainly), skinned animal furs, and bugbear excrement.

The blizzard is unnaturally severe, thanks to the magical intervention of Gellidus the Ice Tyrant. Nevertheless, the Lodge holds up well in the storm. Heroes who remain outdoors without adequate shelter or a strong fire suffer damage from exposure. See the "Outcome" section of Scene Two for details.

The Lodge

The following areas are keyed to the map of the Lodge.

Feasthall. This area is cold and spacious. Birds have taken refuge in the high rafters, and the cold penetrates the structure through a number of small holes in the roof. Hanging from the rafters are six metal lanterns, all without fuel. The main hearth is a 40' long, 5' wide, and 2' deep trench dug into the floor. Rocks, kindling and charred timber fill the hearth. Six stone tables with wooden benches face each other across the hearth, while at the far end of the hall stands a seventh table upon a stone dais. Behind this table are two heavy wooden chairs adorned with antlers. All seven tables are covered with gnawed bones and rotted slabs of meat left by the Lodge's prior inhabitants.

Sleeping Areas. On each side of the feasthall are seven smaller chambers set aside for the hall's resident huntsmen. Most of the chambers are empty. However, there is a chance that a room contains one or two wooden sleeping benches positioned against the far wall. (The Narrator may have the first hero who enters a chamber make a random draw from the Fate Deck. A black aura card indicates no benches; a red aura indicates one bench; a white aura indicates two benches.) The empty rooms were also furnished with benches at one time, but these were broken up and used as kindling by the bugbears.

Guests' Chamber. The floor of this room lies strewn with animal furs, many of which are heaped in one place or another. The mounted heads of a bear, an elk, and a wolf adorn one wall. The room also contains two blackened hearths filled with ashes and burnt chunks of old wood. Hanging from the rafters are three lanterns without oil to fuel them.

Lord's Chamber. This chamber is furnished with animal furs and the mounted heads of various animals, including several deer and a bear. Two lanterns hang from the ceiling from iron chains, and one of the lanterns contains enough oil to burn for seven or eight hours. Six spears and a morning star lean against the far wall, near which a secret door leads to the outside but is frozen shut. Locating the secret door requires an average Perception action, and opening it requires an average Strength action.

> In an AD&D game, elven and dwarven PCs have a 2-in-6 chance of spotting the secret door, while other races have a 1-in-6 chance. Opening it requires a successful Open Doors roll.

The Banshee

Talasia's banshee materializes within minutes of the heroes' arrival. The banshee can pass through solid doors and walls to enter any room within the Lodge. She will not, however, leave the Lodge under any circumstances. She appears in the feasthall after the heroes have taken the time to inspect the desolated structure:

> A cold fog begins to form within the feasthall, burying the earthen floor beneath its pale shroud. As you come together, the fog coalesces into the ghostly figure of an elf. She looks upon you mournfully, but her expression turns to scorn when she casts her spectral gaze toward the elves. Arms outstretched, she begins floating toward the nearest Silvanesti, her face contorted as if to scream.

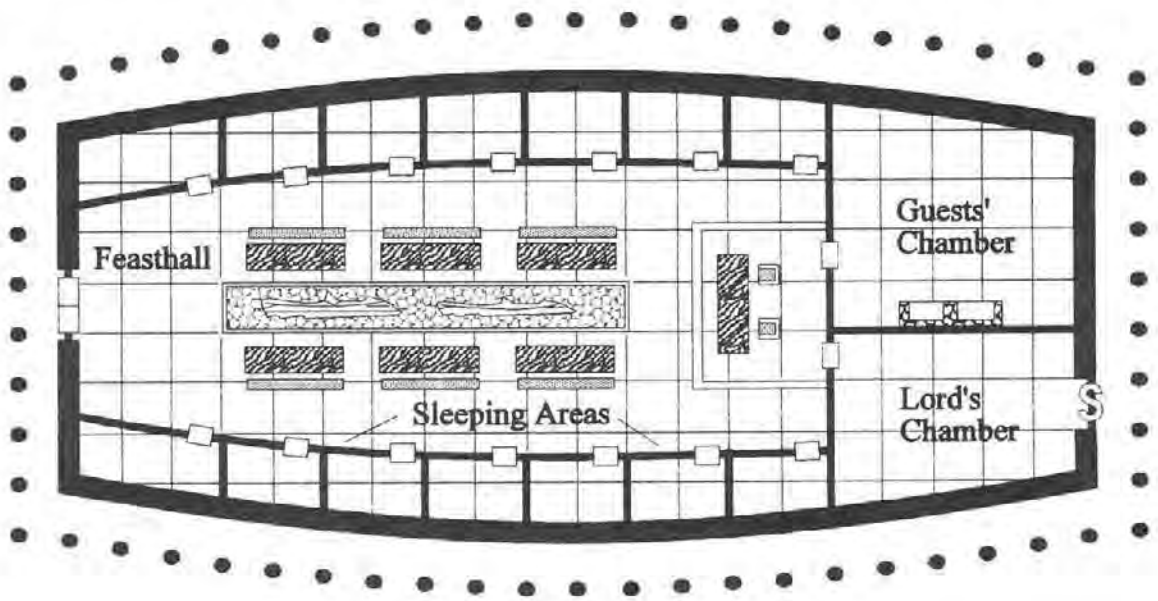
Talasia was a Kagonesti prisoner in Daltigoth who escaped and was found half-dead by the Silvanesti near the mountains. One of her rescuers, a hunter named Daelar, desired Talasia. When she spurned him, Daelar told the others that she was a spy sent by Gellidus, and he impaled her on his spear. Talasia's death cast a grim pall over the Lodge, and most of the Silvanesti were irresistibly compelled to leave. Talasia continues to haunt the Lodge, denying Silvanesti sanctuary until her spirit can learn to forgive them for Daelar's betrayal.

Talasia has no wish to harm non-Silvanesti and avoids using her dreadful death aura unless she is harmed by one of the non-elves or is injured by a blessed weapon. Heroes cannot harm the banshee with normal weapons. A blessed weapon causes damage normally, however. Weapons of renown (or better) inflict half their usual damage, including Arkaryn's magical sword *Icebane*.

Talasia attacks the nearest Silvanesti with her icy touch. By making an average Perception action, Arkaryn and the heroes can determine by her facial tattoos and apparel that Talasia was a Kagonesti elf. This may lead them to speculate that Talasia's

The Lodge

One square= 5 feet



apparent hatred of Silvanesti elves was incurred by some act of betrayal on the part of the Silvanesti. Still weary from the day's travel, Arkaryn and the heroes may wish to seek a peaceful solution to secure safe shelter. If the Silvanesti lay down their weapons and ask for forgiveness, Talasia views their actions with compassion and allows them to remain. If Arkaryn is still leading the elves, his half-Kagonesti origins may sway Talasia toward friendly compliance, and she is more inclined to trust him. The only other options are to destroy the banshee or flee.

Atmosphere

The Narrator can play haunting music while the characters are exploring the feasthall, then wait for the music to intensify before having the banshee manifest. The Narrator can add further intensity to the scene by describing the way the cold fog surrounding Talasia seems to sprout tendrils, and the way it churns when the banshee attacks.

Actions

The heroes may wish to hunt for food before the storm hits, in which case Arkaryn agrees to send one Silvanesti to help the heroes trap rabbits or hunt deer.

❖ Hunt Wild Game

Difficulty:	Average (8)
Action ability:	Reason or Dexterity (see below)
Opposition ability:	None

Comments: Trapping small game is a skill measured against the hero's Reason, while hunting large game with bows and similar weapons pertains to Dexterity. Hunting during the blizzard increases the difficulty level to daunting (16). A single rabbit feeds two or three adults; a deer feeds eight to ten adults.

Mishap: A mishap for this action indicates that the hero has fallen through a thin crust of snow into a crevasse. He sustains no injury, but his comrades must pull him out (challenging Strength action) or dig him out (challenging Dexterity action).

> AD&D characters with the hunting and/or set snares proficiency may hunt or trap wild game. Hunting and trapping during the blizzard is especially difficult, imposing a –8 penalty to proficiency checks.

There are several other actions which may be attempted prior to, during, or after the appearance of the banshee.

❖ Build a Fire

Difficulty:	Varies (see below)
Action ability:	Endurance
Opposition ability:	None

Comments: If the heroes attempt to build a fire in the feasthall or the guests' chamber using the wood that's already present, the action should be considered daunting. If the heroes go outside and retrieve some dead wood, the difficulty of the action drops to challenging. If the heroes break up the remaining cots in the sleeping areas, this dry timber makes excellent kindling for a fire, and the difficulty rating drops to average. Due to the fierce winds of the blizzard,

building a fire outdoors is more unlikely (one degree more difficult). Each hour, the heroes' leader must make a random draw from the Fate Deck; on a black aura, the fire goes out.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that a fire could not be lit with the wood and materials available. Furthermore, if the hero is outdoors, he must make a random draw from the Fate Deck; if a black aura card is drawn, the hero suffers damage from exposure to the cold, sacrificing one card from his own hand.

❖ Find Shelter Outside

Difficulty: Daunting (16)
Action ability: Perception
Opposition ability: None

Comments: Trying to find a shelter outside the Lodge during a blizzard is daunting. If one hero succeeds, the group manages to locate a shallow niche under a thick copse of trees several hundred yards from the feasthall. However, the only way to prevent exposure is to light a fire (see Build a Fire above).

Mishap: The hero fails to locate a suitable shelter and suffers damage from exposure. The player must discard one card from the hero's hand.

❖ Restrain Elves from Attacking

Difficulty: Average (8)
Action ability: Presence
Opposition ability: Spirit

Comments: Talasia is neither cruel nor merciless. If the heroes can persuade the Silvanesti to put down their weapons and refrain from attacking, the banshee does not harm them. This gives Arkaryn the chance to ask for Talasia's forgiveness and seek her permission to use the Lodge for shelter (average Spirit (Spirit) action, opposed by the banshee).

Mishap: The attempt fails, and the elves attack Talasia. Their defiance angers the banshee and forces her to fight back. A peaceful resolution is no longer possible.

Characters

The only monster the heroes encounter at the feasthall is Talasia's banshee. Her presence alone has kept other monsters and wild animals away from the Lodge.

Banshee: Undead. Co 7, Ph 6, In 8, Es 7, Dmg +4, Def –5, also death aura (heroes and characters within 30' of the banshee's wail are struck dead; a successful average Endurance action negates the effect).

Banshee: INT exceptional; AL CE (formerly CG); AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA death wail (creatures within 30' must save vs. death magic or be slain); SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells; impervious to cold and electricity; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 4,000; *MM*/13. A *dispel evil* spell destroys the banshee instantly; holy water inflicts 2d4 hp damage.

Outcome

If the banshee is destroyed or appeased, it vanishes, allowing the heroes and the Silvanesti an undisturbed night of rest. Arkaryn spends the darkening hours sitting by the warm hearth, recounting the mottled history of the Silvanesti homeland (see Book Two, page 68, of the FIFTH AGE boxed rules). If the heroes are willing to listen, he also recites a song he learned as a child:

Wardens of the ancient trees,
Our thoughts alike the river's flow,
We move as a gentle summer's breeze,
With hearts to melt the winter's snow.
We watch our land through starlit eyes,
And cast off fear with baleful scorn;
We soar beneath the moonlit skies
And alight the coming morn.
We bear the brunt of the Dark Queen's wrath,
And cut her legions to the bone;
We hold our course and carve a swath
Through barricades of flesh and stone.
From Silvanost to the Griffon Glades,
From Ergoth to the raging sea,
We strike our foes with elven blades
To guard a legacy.

If asked about Anghanor, Arkaryn says that the Knights of Takhisis held the keep for a time. Arkaryn's predecessors, among others, defended Southern Ergoth against the Knights during the Summer of Chaos in 383 A.C. and drove them away. Now that Anghanor is in the Ice Tyrant's clutches, Arkaryn will sacrifice everything to unveil the "secret" Gellidus is guarding.

Krystalas does not seek respite by the fire as the other Silvanesti do. Krystalas spends most of his time watching the entrance or standing alone in some darkened corner. Although he makes it seem that he does not wish to share the fire with non-elves, he is actually thinking about his family—slain by Gellidus' ogres during the fall of Daltigoth years ago—and doesn't want to be disturbed. If one of the heroes confronts him and makes an average Spirit (Spirit) action, he can speak to Krystalas without disturbing him. If the action ends in a mishap, Krystalas is incensed by the disturbance and attacks the hero in unarmed combat.

In the morning, after a restful night, the heroes awaken to find several feet of snow on the ground. The sun is shining brightly in the pristine blue sky, however, and the Silvanesti spend the early hours building snowshoes out of wood and twigs. Stacked near the entrance to the Lodge is one pair of snowshoes for each hero as well. The snowshoes do not improve the heroes' movement rate significantly, but they do keep the cold snow out of their boots. Once the heroes and elves depart, take a break and then proceed with Act Two.

Act Two: Icy Mountain Pass

Scene One: The Campsite

The heroes pass through the snow-covered foothills to reach Gateway Pass, a winding passage through the mountains. Near the mouth of the pass, the heroes spot the remnants of a large campsite left from the night before. A search of the campsite reveals prints in the fresh snow (left by several ogres and six Kagonesti prisoners). The tracks lead north through the mountains.

Overview

The campsite was left by a group of ogres and their half-ogre leader, Firestorm. Firestorm was returning to Daltigoth with several Kagonesti captives when the blizzard forced his band to make camp for the night in a protected enclave nestled in the mouth of Gateway Pass. Heroes who follow the tracks leading from the campsite stumble upon a dead Kagonesti male half-buried in the snow—slain by exposure to the cold.

Getting Started

The Narrator should review the rules on healing (Book One, Chapter Five of the FIFTH AGE rules). The heroes may have sustained injuries in previous

scenes, and they will need all or most of their strength back if they are to make it through Gateway Pass alive.

First Impressions

This scene occurs in the late morning after the blizzard. The heroes have been trudging through waist-high snow for several miles to reach Gateway Pass before noon. The Silvanesti renegades are cold and non-conversational for most of the journey.

Read the following text to the players when the heroes reach Firestorm's abandoned campsite:

> After an exhausting trek, you reach the mountains. According to Arkaryn, a narrow pass cuts a straight path through the frigid mountains. Steep cliffs arise on either side of the pass. After a brief stop, you head into the mouth of Gateway Pass only to stumble upon an abandoned campsite tucked away in a narrow enclave. Blackened pits of charred wood stand out against the white snow, and bits of discarded refuse are strewn about.

There are no tracks leading into the campsite, as these would have been obliterated by the blizzard. However, tracks can be seen leading away from the campsite and heading north into the mountains.

The Story Continues

The heroes will likely consider a few options at this point. First, they might recommend a thorough search of the campsite (average Perception action) that yields any or all of the following information:

❖ Until recently, the camp was occupied by at least a dozen ogres. The charred remains of five deer lie among the ashes of a large bonfire. Other clues suggest that these ogres were sent from Daltigoth, as there are indentations left by portable tents and many of the tracks were made by large, stitched boots.

❖ The ogres have at least four prisoners, possibly elves, as there are several sets of smaller footprints huddled in one section of the encampment, and these tracks lead north along with those of the ogres.

If the heroes follow the tracks leading north through the mountains, they find one of the prisoners a few hundred feet from the encampment:

> Half-buried in the snow is the frozen corpse of a Kagonesti elf, his petrified face and frozen arms jutting out through the soft, white shroud of snow. Tied around his wrists is a knotted piece of icy rope.

Heroes with the mystic sphere of spiritualism may endeavor to contact the spirit of the slain elf. (Only those with a Spirit code of "B" can commune with the elf.) The victim claims to be Thal-Ranor, a Kagonesti exile who was captured (along with nine others from his clan) by the half-ogre Firestorm and his roving band of ogre hunters. The Kagonesti were hunted down, bound, and hauled toward Daltigoth as a gift for the Ice Tyrant. Injuries and hypothermia claimed three other Kagonesti before Thal-Ranor fell; this leaves six elves in Firestorm's custody. Thal-Ranor's corpse conceals nothing of value.

Arkaryn knows Firestorm—the bastard son of the great ogre Tdarnk, savage ruler of Daltigoth—by reputation. Arkaryn's blood boils when he ponders the number of elves Firestorm has slain since pledging his allegiance to the Ice Tyrant. If contact with Thal-Ranor's spirit is made and Arkaryn learns about the half-ogre, he heads north with the ulterior purpose of freeing the surviving Kagonesti from Firestorm's clutches. (Arkaryn, being half Kagonesti, does not share the Silvanesti prejudice toward other elven races.)

Krystalas likewise has a sound reason to despise Firestorm, for it was Firestorm who (presumably) executed Krystalas' family in Daltigoth. Krystalas does not reveal this to the heroes to avoid incurring their sympathies, but the mere mention of Firestorm's name visibly agitates Krystalas who uses whatever influence he has to press forward.

Atmosphere

This scene is intended to foreshadow the impending encounter with Firestorm and his ogres (see Scene Two). Heroes may rest at the campsite, hunt for food, or strike up a conversation with the Silvanesti. The elves become increasingly willing to communicate with the heroes on a more personal level—perhaps even asking questions about the heroes' pasts or the state of affairs in their respective homelands.

Actions

If the heroes attempt to hunt for food, refer to the Hunt Wild Game action in Act One: Scene Three. Heroes may follow the ogre tracks with automatic success (but see "Outcome" below). The difficulty rating for casting a spell that enables the heroes to communicate with the dead elf's spirit varies with the spell's invocation time and duration (determined by the mystic).

> A PC cleric may attempt to cast a *speak with dead* spell upon Thal-Ranor's corpse. Thal-Ranor was equivalent to a 1st-level fighter and is not entitled to a saving throw. The duration of the spell and the number of questions Thal-Ranor's spirit answers varies with the level of the cleric casting the spell (see *PHB*/214).

Outcome

If the heroes proceed on course, regardless of whether they follow the tracks in the snow, they catch up with Firestorm and his ogres near the exit of Gateway Pass (as described in Scene Two below). The journey through the pass is hampered by a stiff, biting wind from the north as well as blowing snow that erases the ogres' tracks within hours.

Scene Two: Firestorm

This scene occurs as the heroes near the exit of windy Gateway Pass. The heroes and their Silvanesti comrades stumble upon Firestorm and his ogre marauders who are cutting through the mountains on their way back to Daltigoth.

Overview

By good fortune, an untimely avalanche has just decimated Firestorm's band, leaving only the half-ogre and five ogres alive to continue the journey to Daltigoth. The avalanche depleted the ogres' numbers but luckily spared three of the Kagonesti prisoners. (The other three Kagonesti were killed by the weight of the snow.) The heroes have a good chance to liberate the Kagonesti if they attack the ogres while they are digging out of the avalanche

Getting Started

In playing out this scene, the Narrator should have Book One of the FIFTH AGE

rules turned to Chapter Four. This scene has the heroes fighting the remnants of Firestorm's band and requires familiarity with the rules governing combat.

First Impressions

> You stand upon a ridge of ice, fighting the harsh wind and peering north toward the mouth of Gateway Pass. Beneath you, an avalanche has filled the pass with snow, chunks of stone, and bits of wrenched earth. By Arkaryn's assessment, the pass remains navigable despite the landfall left by the avalanche. It is at this time that you notice six large humanoids crawling out from beneath the snow. The humanoids are garbed in thick furs.

The Story Continues

Firestorm the half-ogre is among the survivors of the avalanche. Six ogres remain buried alive beneath tons of snow and ice, but five others have managed to dig their way to freedom. The Silvanesti wish to seize this opportunity to catch the ogres off guard, charging forth with their swords drawn. The stiff wind makes long bows, crossbows and other missile weapons less effective. (All missile attacks become two degrees more difficult; hence, an average action becomes a daunting one.) At the Narrator's discretion, hurled weapons, sling stones, and similarly weighted projectiles may be less affected (shift difficulty by one degree) or, in the case of heavier missiles such as boulders, completely unaffected.

If the heroes accompany the Silvanesti, they soon find themselves in combat with the ogres. Off to one side, pulling themselves from the snowy rubble, are the ogres' three surviving Kagonesti prisoners—alive, cold, and barely able to walk.

> Because of the strong gale, all missile attacks in the AD&D game system are made at –5 to hit unless the PCs maneuver to a position upwind. This penalty is in addition to those incurred by range and other modifiers.

The ogres are too preoccupied to notice the heroes from a distance. The sudden avalanche not only caught them off guard but deprived them of their belongings as well. When the ogres become aware of the heroes and the Silvanesti, they equip themselves with whatever weapons are available and defend themselves. They can hurl chunks of rock or use spears recovered from the snow.

Firestorm will never surrender to elves. No matter how grim the situation, he fights to the death. If Firestorm is slain or captured, the other ogres flee northward. Otherwise, they fight to the death. If the heroes choose not to help the elves fight the ogres, the Narrator may describe the battle between Firestorm and Arkaryn as it unfolds:

> Arkaryn charges the leader of the ogre marauders—a hideously deformed creature with teeth the size of walrus tusks and hair like wild flame. The foul half-ogre heaves himself from the ice in time to block Arkaryn's sword with the shaft of its spear. Splinters of wood freckle the snow as Firestorm's spear shatters under the force of Arkaryn's blow. The long sword cuts a deep gash into Firestorm's hide. The half-ogre reels momentarily but then lunges forward with startling agility. Arkaryn is taken to the ground and, in the ensuing tumble, has the sword knocked from his grasp.

Unless the heroes come to Arkaryn's immediate aid, Firestorm wrestles the elf to the ground and impales Arkaryn with the broken tip of his great spear (which lies imbedded in the snow nearby). Arkaryn dies, and the following round Firestorm tries to claim *Icebane*. Unless the heroes intercede, Krystalas fights Firestorm for custody of Arkaryn's blade. The Narrator may determine the outcome of the battle, keeping in mind that player callousness may cause Krystalas to fall beneath Firestorm's might. While Firestorm fights Arkaryn and Krystalas, the remaining five ogres try to hold the heroes and other Silvanesti at bay.

If Firestorm is slain or captured, heroes searching the half-ogre find 150 pieces of silver in a belt pouch and a roughly-drawn map of Southern Ergoth from Daltigoth to Foghaven Vale. The Narrator may show the players a sketch of the map included with this adventure. The half-ogre also wears a gold amulet shaped like a stylized white dragon which identifies him as an emissary of Gellidus. Anyone wearing this amulet can command obedience from the Ice Tyrant's minions throughout Southern Ergoth, including the white dragon Wintergale (see Act Three: Scene Two).

If one or more Kagonesti are rescued from Firestorm's clutches, they express their thanks before heading back south toward their homeland (in the woods outside Silvamori). One of the Kagonesti asks where the heroes are headed; if the heroes mention the keep of Anghanor, the elf imparts a fragment of conversation overheard between Firestorm and one of the ogres (spoken in ogre, which the elf understands):

> "I overheard our captors say that Anghanor is where the Ice Tyrant has hidden artifacts of great power known as the White Orbs. Many have speculated that these relics were taken from mainland Ansalon after the Chaos War. Gellidus has assigned one of his consorts the task of guarding the ruins, while the lands around the keep are protected by thanoi."

The Kagonesti are not military types and cannot stand toe-to-toe with any of the Ice Tyrant's minions. Marching them further into Gellidus' domain would be a death sentence. Heroes may assume, as the elves do, that the "white orbs" mentioned above are Orbs of Dragonkind—powerful artifacts used during the War of the Lance. However, the "white orbs" are actually several dozen white dragon eggs laid by Gellidus' consorts. However, this fact should not be revealed until Act Three.

If the heroes fight courageously, they may yet impress the grim Krystalas. Moreover, one of the Silvanesti (Narrator's choice of male or female) takes a liking to the most daring and/or charismatic hero in the party (i.e. the one with the highest Presence score). The Narrator can develop a scene between the infatuated Silvanesti and the hero. The scene may be played as awkward or genuinely heart-felt, depending on the personality of the hero and the relationship he has established with the Silvanesti renegades. In FIFTH AGE adventures, romance is a key element to any story. Furthermore, in terms of this particular tale, it helps justify why the heroes would risk their lives to help the Silvanesti fulfill their quest.

Atmosphere

The Narrator can greatly enhance the battle by playing sweeping, percussive music in the background.

Actions

The Silvanesti renegades realize that Firestorm's death will ring throughout Daltigoth, and that Firestorm's father Tdarnk will be shaken by the loss. They see the avalanche as an opportunity to rid Southern Ergoth of Firestorm forever, and they seize it regardless of the heroes' actions. The heroes may focus on rescuing the three Kagonesti survivors rather than face Firestorm's ogres, but this does not distinguish them in the eyes of Arkaryn or the other Silvanesti, and Krystalas openly scorns them for such a choice.

The heroes may attempt to Gain Surprise (average Perception (Agility) action), using the blowing snow to hide their approach. Success means the heroes have caught the ogres unawares; the ogres are still pulling themselves out of the heavy snow, searching for lost equipment or gathering the prisoners. A mishap indicates that the ogres surprised the heroes instead; thinking they have taken the ogres by surprise, the heroes themselves are taken aback when the ogres find a way to outflank them and launch a pre-emptive attack.

Any attempt to rescue the three Kagonesti places the heroes within striking range of at least one ogre. The deep snow makes melee attacks more difficult, imposing a one-degree difficulty penalty. (This penalty applies to the ogres as well.) Heroes who wish to use bows must **Maneuver Upwind** to avoid the penalty imposed by the wind. If Arkaryn and Krystalas are both slain, the heroes may assume leadership roles and try to persuade Firestorm to release his prisoners (see **Negotiate with Enemy** below). If he has been injured, Firestorm may be inclined to comply and cut his losses. If Firestorm is slain, the chance of success improves.

The Kagonesti have been mistreated by the ogres and injured by the avalanche. Heroes with access to mystical spells may attempt to heal the elves (see Chapter Five in Book One of the FIFTH AGE rules for details).

❖ Maneuver Upwind

Difficulty:	Challenging (12)
Action ability:	Agility
Opposition ability:	None

Comments: Success means that the heroes have positioned themselves upwind from the ogres. This negates surprise, as the ogres catch the heroes' scent, but it allows the heroes to fire missile weapons (bows) without penalty due to the wind. The endeavor is considered challenging because the heroes must cross over or maneuver around the heaps of snow and debris left by the avalanche.

Mishap: This indicates that the heroes are unable to move into position and that Firestorm and his ogres have somehow cut them off.

❖ Negotiate with Enemy

Difficulty:	See below
Action ability:	Presence
Opposition ability:	Spirit

Comments: Firestorm is incredibly stubborn, and any attempt to negotiate with him should be considered a challenging action. If Firestorm is slain or indisposed, the action's difficulty is treated as average, assuming they speak ogre. If the heroes are successful, they may negotiate for the Kagonesti captives' release and safe passage from the mountains. Negotiating for the ogres' surrender requires a separate daunting Presence (Spirit) action.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that Firestorm and his ogres laugh in the heroes' faces and attack them. Moreover, the heroes' leader must draw randomly from the Fate Deck; if a black aura card is drawn, Firestorm or one of the ogres indiscriminately kills one of the Kagonesti prisoners.

Characters

This scene involves Firestorm, the ogres and their elven prisoners.

Firestorm: Half-ogre male adult, sadistic demeanor, Champion. Ag 7B, Dx 7C, En 10B, St 9C, Re 4C, Pe 5B, Sp 4C, Pr 5B, Dmg +4 (large spear), Def –2 (heavy hides) or –5 (with target shield), also thrown weapons (rocks/+3).

> **Firestorm** (8th-level male half-ogre fighter): AL CE; AC 5 (4 with shield); MV 9; F8; hp 73; THAC0 10; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d10+7 (long spear) or 1d6+7 (rock); S 19 (+3/+7), D 15, C 17, I 11, W 6, Ch 6; ML 16; XP 2,000; *MM*/274 (modified); hide armor, heavy wooden shield, long spear (Dmg 1d10 S/M, 2d6 L), amulet of the Ice Tyrant (non-magical; shaped like white dragon; worth 500 gp).

Five ogres: Hostile nonhumans, ruthless demeanors, Adventurers. Co 5, Ph 13, In 3, Es 6, Dmg +5, Def -2 (heavy hides), also thrown weapons (rocks/+3).

> **Ogres** (5): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 25, 21, 20, 18, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+6 (long spear); SA hurl rocks for 1d6+6 hp damage, +2 to hit with melee weapons; SZ L; ML 12; XP 270; *MM*/272; long spear (see Firestorm above).

Three Kagonesti: Kagonesti (two women, one man), cautious demeanors, Novices. Co 6, Ph 4 (currently 2 due to injuries), In 5, Es 6, Dmg +2 (unarmed), Def –2 (leather). The elves' names are Alian-Tir (woman), Daor-Nel (woman) and Karan-Vaas (man).

> **Kagonesti elves** (3): INT high; AL CG; AC 8; MV 12 (6 in weakened state); HD 1+1; hp 2 (7), 3 (6), 1 (5); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit with bows; ML 9; XP 500 (for rescuing); *MM*/108 (elf, variant); leather armor, unarmed.

Outcome

Once the heroes and elves save the Kagonesti and deal with Firestorm, they may continue marching toward Anghanor, approximately one day's journey north. If the heroes take Firestorm's amulet, they will have an easier time confronting the white dragon encountered later in the adventure. If Firestorm or any of his ogres escape, they head directly to Daltigoth to report their encounter to Tdarnk, but their trek takes several days by which time the heroes should have arrived at Anghanor and discovered the Ice Tyrant's "secret."

If the Kagonesti are slain, the heroes will not have any information about Gellidus' "white orbs" unless they use magic from the mystical sphere of spiritualism to contact the dead elves' spirits. Even then, the dead Kagonesti may be less cooperative with heroes who allowed them to perish.

If Arkaryn dies in this scene, Krystalas takes *Icebane* and imparts some final words to his leader's spirit (see "Outcome" in Act One: Scene Two). If Krystalas is slain, the sword falls to the next Silvanesti in line. Krystalas does not allow a hero or a Kagonesti elf to take the sword so long as there are able-bodied Silvanesti left alive, and he attacks any hero who dares claim it. Likewise, the Silvanesti do not abide "heroes" who showed cowardice by not engaging the ogres in battle. Krystalas

openly rebukes them, and the other elves lose sympathy and respect for them.

Scene Three: The White Stag

This scene takes place at the northern mouth of Gateway Pass, roughly one hour after the heroes' bloody engagement with Firestorm's ogres. By this time, the rescued Kagonesti should have bid farewell to their saviors and the heroes should be accompanied by the remnants of Arkaryn's Silvanesti renegades.

Overview

The land north of the Lost Gaard Mountains is nothing more than a vast, windswept, frigid plain. Heading north toward Anghanor, the heroes are confronted by a white stag, considered by many a mystical boon for travelers and journeymen. The stag tries to lead them along a divergent route—eastward toward an old sentinel tower wherein they find shelter, a mad dwarven hermit, and an alternate means of travel to Anghanor.

Getting Started

In previous DRAGONLANCE stories, the white stag has provided heroes of conscience with good fortune while simultaneously reminding them that "higher forces" are guiding them to their fate. Part of this scene takes place within the Sentinel Tower. The tower was once an outpost used by the Knights of Takhisis. When the Knights withdrew from Southern Ergoth, the tower became a refuge for elves fleeing Daltigoth and the tyranny of Gellidus.

First Impressions

The heroes are leaving the mountains and beginning their long journey across the Frigid Plains of Southern Ergoth. The following text assumes the heroes are pressing onward:

> North of the mountains, the land becomes a vast and frigid plain of ice and blowing snow. The Silvanesti warn of thanoi hunters—walrus-like humanoids enslaved by the Ice Tyrant. The thanoi lay claim to this frozen wasteland, constantly searching for warm-blooded prey.
> Youpress onward through the biting wind, heading north toward distant Anghanor, when suddenly a shape emerges from the blinding snow several yards to your right. Watching you closely is a white stag, a perfect crown of antlers lending to the beast's imperious size.
>
> A hungry man would be tempted to draw his bow, but the Silvanesti do not. Nevertheless, your advance causes the stag to bolt. Left behind in the snow are deep cloven tracks as the stag bounds effortlessly away. Then, just before it vanishes in the swirling snow, it stops, gazes over its shoulder and seemingly beckons you to follow.

The Story Continues

If the heroes follow the white stag, it leads them eastward. Chasing the stag takes the heroes and their Silvanesti comrades several miles off course, away from Anghanor toward distant Daltigoth. This may lead players to question the stag's intentions, which is fine.

Any hero who injures the white stag is cursed and forfeits one card (chosen randomly by the Narrator) from his Hand of Fate. The curse itself affects how others perceive the hero from that point on; regardless of how hard the hero tries, he is always viewed as a brute. Harmless creatures (including wild game) scamper away from the hero; larger, more threatening creatures always attack the hero first. A mystic with access to the animism sphere may attempt to undo the hero's "curse" with a spell, which also restores the hero's lost card with a new one drawn from the Fate Deck.

If allowed to continue, the stag leads the heroes directly to the Sentinel Tower. Read the following if the heroes continue their pursuit:

> You climb over a sharp crest of snow, blinded momentarily by flecks of blowing ice. Looking ahead, you cannot see the white stag. Its cloven tracks come to an abrupt halt, as if the beast vanished into thin air Peering through the drifting snow, you can just barely discern a structure jutting out of the ice several hundred yards away. It looks like a tower.

The Sentinel tower serves as ideal shelter against the wind and blowing ice. The base of the tower is buried beneath huge drifts of snow, but the heroes can climb a flight of icy steps to reach the main entrance on the second floor (see "Actions" below). The tower's secret entrance, located on the ground floor, is sealed behind a thick sheet of ice and several feet of snow.

The sole occupant of the tower is an evil Zhakar dwarf named Araxos. Like other Zhakar dwarves, Araxos suffers from a magical and incurable disease that tatters his skin, raises lumps in his flesh, and leaves him mentally unbalanced. He believes he's the agent of the red dragon Malystryx, although he is far removed from her domain and has never actually encountered Malys. His purpose—so he claims—is to spy on the Ice Tyrant for his mistress. He spends most of his time on the third floor of the tower, mumbling to himself and pretending he is Gellidus. Upon hearing intruders, he hides his head in the cowl of his gray cloak, dons a silver dragon mask to conceal his plague-ridden visage, and trudges downstairs to "greet" his latest visitors.

The silver mask that Araxos wears makes his cold, cracked voice sound even more ominous. To complete the look, Araxos wears a severed eagle's talon around his neck like some sort of talisman. After introducing himself as the "Keeper of the Sentinel Tower," Araxos offers sanctuary in exchange for a small payment (food, coins, or weapons, in that order). If the heroes mention the white stag, the paranoid Araxos begins to suspect that the stag is actually Gellidus in disguised form, luring the heroes to the tower to destroy him. Nothing the heroes say or do convinces Araxos otherwise. Believing that the heroes are assassins sent by the Ice Tyrant, Araxos decides to kill them in their sleep if they dare choose to remain. Araxos denies the heroes access to the third floor and rooftop, attacking heroes who defy or challenge him.

Araxos knows nothing about the Ice Tyrant or what awaits the heroes in Anghanor. However, he once lived in the mountains near Anghanor and knows the keep can be reached only by air or by crossing a great stone bridge. He knows where the tunnel leading to the bridge is located but neither volunteers this information nor offers himself as a guide. The only reason the heroes may take an interest in Araxos is because he owns a magical item that may provide the heroes with an alternate means of travel—a figurine with the ability to

transform into a monstrous roc. See Araxos' Room below for details.

Sentinel Tower

The following areas are keyed to the map of the Sentinel Tower.

Main Hall. A handsome banner depicting an armored Knight of Takhisis astride a blue dragon hangs from one wall, and a moldering bearskin rug lies in the middle of the floor. A staircase descends to the ground floor and climbs to the third floor. One round after the heroes enter the hall, Araxos descends the stairs to greet them.

Lord's Chamber. In the days when this tower served as a military outpost, this chamber was originally set aside for the tower's lord. It is furnished with a comfortable bed and a fireplace. Above the mantle hangs a triangular horse shield depicting the symbol of the Knights of Takhisis (a grinning skull with bat wings).

Kitchen. Araxos has made good use of this kitchen, preparing meals for himself with the available implements and dishware. He is a skilled hunter and cook and knows several recipes for cooking prairie dogs and rabbits. Many of the utensils are unwashed. A warm fire crackles in the hearth. Next to the fireplace is a stone box containing wood and kindling for the fire.

Hanging on hooks under the table are two skinned rabbits caught by Araxos. The rabbits are edible, although they won't provide much sustenance for a large group of heroes or characters.

Barracks. Eight comfortable beds line the walls of this otherwise barren chamber. The room is much colder than other areas of the tower, making sleep impossible without some source of warmth (such as several lanterns, torches, or other contained fire). A secret door set into one wall leads to the outside; however, it is sealed shut by ice and cannot be opened unless the portal is warmed or the ice is chipped away from the outside.

Araxos' Room. Araxos typically resides here, sleeping on a small pile of prairie dog and rabbit furs. Hidden under the furs is Araxos's treasure: a small eagle-like statuette carved from green stone flecked with orange. Araxos considers it his most precious bauble. Crafted by elves in Silvamori during the Age of Despair, the figurine works only in the hands of an elf or half-elf (or, at the Narrator's behest, a valiant or heroic non-elf). The figurine's magic will not activate for anyone who is evil, selfish or otherwise self-motivated. For this reason, Araxos has been unable to use its powers or call upon the roc as a mount.

The roc figurine transforms into a roc upon command. The figurine only activates in the spacious outdoors. The roc is friendly toward the figurine's owner and communicates telepathically. The great bird is also sensitive to the demeanors of all living creatures within near missile range. The roc can carry eight riders on its back and two in each talon (a dozen total). After three transformations to roc form, the figurine becomes a normal statuette (worth roughly 50 steel pieces), forever losing its magical properties. The maximum duration of any transformation is eight hours.

Rooftop. The roof of the tower is covered by several feet of heavy snow. Opening the trap door to the roof requires an average Strength action.

Atmosphere

The Narrator should preserve the mystery of the white stag and avoid dropping hints as to its purpose or intent. The white stag leads the heroes to Sentinel Tower because it knows that Araxos has a magical figurine which may expedite their journey.

Araxos' tower occupies a rather forlorn corner of Gellidus' domain. The Narrator may emphasize the sense of isolation by playing music of a somber vein or by playing pre-recorded sound effects such as blowing wind. Although the mad dwarf is not especially dangerous against the combined strength of the heroes and their Silvanesti allies, the Narrator is encouraged to play Araxos as a mysterious figure with a somewhat sorcerous presence who hides behind his silver dragon mask. The heroes should be intimidated, not domineering. Araxos should be played "sane" until the heroes' actions dictate otherwise.

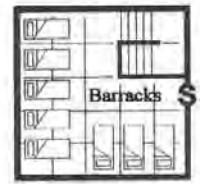
Actions

Heroes wishing to enter the tower must climb the icy steps to the main door on the second level (easy Agility action); a mishap indicates that the hero has slipped and fallen down the staircase, sustaining five damage points.

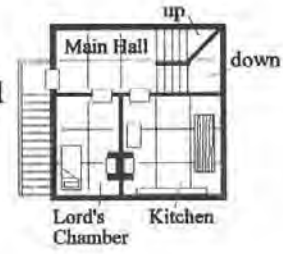
Sentinel Tower

One square = 5 feet

Ground Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor

Roof

In AD&D terms, any PC attempting to climb or descend the outside steps must make a Dexterity check or slip, sustaining 2d4 hp damage from the resulting fall.

Those who do not wish to enter the tower by the main door can try to Scale the Tower Walls to reach the upper levels. Once inside the tower, the heroes encounter Araxos. If they kill or subdue the dwarf, the heroes can search for treasure and find Araxos' figurine (average Reason or Perception action). If they find Araxos' roc figurine, they can try to activate it (easy Reason action); a mishap indicates the hero has dropped it in the deep snow and must make an average Perception action to find it again. Heroes may also hunt for food (see Hunt Wild Game in Act One: Scene Three).

❖ Scale the Tower Walls
Difficulty: Daunting (16)
Action ability: Agility
Opposition ability: None

Comments: Success means the hero has successfully climbed from the ground to the third floor parapet, or from the third floor parapet to the roof.

Mishap: The hero slips and falls, sustaining two damage points. The snow helps cushion the fall.

In AD&D terms, any PC attempting to scale the walls must make a climbing check or slip, sustaining 1d6 hp damage from the fall. All climbing checks are made at –40% due to the icy conditions and the brisk wind. PCs without the mountaineering proficiency cannot scale the walls.

Characters

The scene features the mystical white stag and Araxos the dwarf. Statistics are also given for the roc form of Araxos' magical roc figurine.

White stag: Animal. Co 6, Ph 10, In 5, Es 7, Dmg +7, Def –4, also kick.

White stag: INT high; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d3/1d3 (hooves) or 2d4 (antlers); SD magical weapons needed to hit; SZ L; ML 11; XP 420; *MM*/241 mammal, stag, variant). Injuring the white stag invokes a powerful curse which causes the attacking PCs to suffer –2 penalties on all saves until a *remove curse* is cast on each affected character.

Araxos Ashfist: Zhakar dwarf, adult male, plotting demeanor, Rabble. Co 4, Ph 6, In 6, Es 6, Dmg +3 (short sword), Def -2 (leather), also missile weapons (light crossbow/+3).

Araxos Ashfist (5th-level dwarven thief): AL CE; AC 6; MV 6; T5; hp 26; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d6+1 (light crossbow); SA rogue abilities; SD +4 to saves vs. poison and magic, 60' infravision; S 16 (+0/+1), D 16, C 15, I 10, W 7, Ch 5; SZ S; ML 15; XP 270; *MM*/94 (dwarf, variant); thieving skills: PP 50%, OL 45%, FRT 40%, MS 50%, HS 50%, DN 35%, CW 70%, RL 5%; silver dragon mask (worth 250 gp), dwarven *cloak of protection +2, figurine of wondrous power* (roc), short sword, light crossbow. Araxos has the hunting, cooking, tumbling, and appraising proficiencies.

Roc: Special mount. Co 15, Ph 54, In 2, Es 8, Dmg +12, Def –3, also dive, mentalism (allows roc to communicate telepathically with owner), sensitivity (allows roc to read the demeanors of others within near missile range).

Roc: INT animal; AL N; AC 4; MV 3, fly 30 (E); HD 18; hp 121; THAC0 5; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 3d6/3d6 or 4d6; SA surprise, clutch prey; SD cannot be surprised; SZ G (60' long, 120' wingspan); ML 11; XP 10,000; *MM*/303.

Outcome

If the heroes choose not to follow the white stag, they may continue their northward trek toward Anghanor. After several hours and many miles of travel, the heroes are confronted by thanoi hunters. Proceed with the next scene.

If the heroes followed the white stag and obtained Araxos' magical roc figurine, they can use the roc as a winged mount and reach Anghanor within a few hours. However, the roc can bear only the weight of a dozen human/elven passengers, meaning those who cannot ride the roc must either traverse the Frigid Plains to reach Anghanor or remain behind at the Sentinel Tower. Injured Silvanesti, with the exception of Arkaryn and Krystalas, reluctantly choose to remain at the tower. Heroes who have sustained serious injuries may also bow out of the adventure at this time, remaining at the refuge until their wounds are healed while their comrades press on toward Anghanor. (In the meantime, those who remain may have to deal with the insane Araxos.)

If alive, Arkaryn insists on flying to Anghanor whether he is injured or not. If he is slain, Krystalas takes his place. If the heroes fly to Anghanor, skip the next scene and proceed directly to Act Three: Scene Two. Heroes who walk the distance to Anghanor arrive one day later than their roc-borne comrades and must brave the dangers of Gellidus' icy domain (see next scene for details).

Read the following text if the heroes use the roc to fly to Anghanor:

Calling upon the ancient magic of the statuette, you bring into being the greatest avian ever to soar the skies of Krynn. The great bird thrusts itself into the air, its wings spreading more than a hundred feet, its immense feathers shielding you against the cold and the wind as it climbs above the clouds toward distant Anghanor. Clutching to its back and talons, you and your fellow riders defy peril and risk everything to uncover whatever secret the Ice Tyrant is guarding. Beneath you, the Frigid Plains of Southern Ergoth pass quickly. Ahead of you lies the hope of victory—or the jaws of death.

Act Three: Legacy of Frost

Scene One: The Frigid Plains

If the heroes are traveling by foot, the journey from the mountains (or the tower) to Anghanor takes them across the Frigid Plains of Gellidus' domain—and into the clutches of the Ice Tyrant's thanoi marauders. If the heroes obtained the magical roc figurine from the Sentinel Tower, they can use the giant bird to reach Anghanor in a matter of hours, sparing them from this encounter.

Overview

While traversing the section of Southern Ergoth known as the Frigid Plains, the heroes and their Silvanesti allies are attacked by thanoi enslaved by the Ice Tyrant. The thanoi are ruthless, devious hunters unfettered by extreme cold. The heroes are treading across a great glacier toward Anghanor when they hear the braying sounds of thanoi hunters bearing down on them.

Getting Started

The Silvanesti realize they have entered open and perilous territory, and they are quick to ready their bows in anticipation of a thanoi ambush. The Narrator may want to keep Book One: Chapter Four (Combat) of the FIFTH AGE game handy.

First Impressions

> The journey across the Frigid Plains proves arduous. Icy fissures carve serrated paths through the great glaciers, forcing you to pursue a roundabout route toward Anghanor. The wind slashes through your layers of fur, numbing your limbs and causing every joint to throb with cold, numbing pain. Deep braying noises can be heard drawing nearer—the ominous sound of a thanoi hunting party.

The Story Continues

The thanoi are well-conditioned to this climate and suffer no movement penalty traversing the Frigid Plains. When the thanoi finally catch up with the heroes, read the following text:

> You can hear the guttural snarls of the thanoi raiders getting closer. They seem to be converging from two directions, outflanking you as you press onward. Jutting out of the glacier at a slight angle ahead of you is a jagged shard of ice nearly thirty feet high. The monstrous shard provides a welcome barrier against the harsh wind, but as you approach it, several tusken humanoids emerge from behind the ice with a vicious gleam in their eyes.

The thanoi have instructions to capture trespassers alive and bring them to Anghanor as food for Wintergale's larder. However, the thanoi do not hesitate to kill any foe who resists them. If the heroes surrender, they are prodded at spear-point across the Frigid Plains toward Anghanor. The thanoi do not bother to remove the heroes' armor and weapons, forcing them to carry their own equipment across the harsh, glacial land.

If the heroes attack the thanoi, the preferred thanoi tactic is to "double up" against single opponents, taking them out quickly before setting upon new foes. Thus, thanoi attack single targets in pairs or small groups of three or four, allowing one of their number to take the brunt of the damage while the others jab at their prey from behind with spears or gouge them with their sharp tusks. Thanoi are startled and frightened by open flame. Magical lights and lanterns do not scare them, but torches and other exposed fires do. Unfortunately, the wind is so strong that most small flames (including torches) simply blow out. Only a bonfire or a magical fire has a chance of survival on the Frigid Plains.

The heroes may attempt to avoid the thanoi altogether by hiding in the snow, pressing forward at an exhausting pace, using magic (illusory fires) to frighten away the thanoi, or using magic (obscurement spells) to hide from them.

Arkaryn's sword *Icebane* is a most valuable weapon in defeating the thanoi. If the heroes and Silvanesti are on the verge of defeat, the blade suddenly bursts into a searing magical flame, startling the thanoi and causing them to recoil in terror. This event (triggered by Arkaryn or whoever happens to be wielding *Icebane*) should be considered a *deus ex machina*—a last resort used by the Narrator to dramatically turn the tide of battle in the heroes' favor.

The thanoi recognize Firestorm's amulet. (See Act Two: Scene Two for details.) They do not attack the possessor of the amulet except in self-defense, believing he is an emissary sent by the Ice Tyrant. If the heroes can communicate their wish to reach Anghanor (see Negotiate with the Thanoi in "Actions" below), the walrus-men lead the heroes to Anghanor by the most expedient route.

The encounter with the thanoi can be dangerous due to their sheer numbers, and some of the Silvanesti and heroes may fall as a result of bad luck or poor gaming. However, the Narrator should avoid decimating the heroes before they reach Anghanor. If necessary, the Narrator may rule that the thanoi simply overbear the heroes, seize their weapons, and drag them to Anghanor (unconscious, if need be).

Atmosphere

If the heroes are still recovering from their ordeal with Firestorm and his ogres (Act Two: Scene Two), the Narrator may wish to preempt this encounter until the heroes draw closer to their destination. However, the journey across the Frigid Plains is supposed to be perilous, and the Narrator must do everything to make the trip seem as unpleasant as possible. Time should be taken to mention the stabbing wind, ice in the heroes' boots, blowing snow, and unstable footing. The Narrator may also throw in a few ominous sightings: a large thanoi war band marching in the distance, a pack of winter wolves, or perhaps a white dragon weaving among the clouds high overhead.

To balance the unpleasantness, The Narrator may also develop the relationship formed in Act Two: Scene Two between one of the Silvanesti and one of the heroes. The elf could collapse out of exhaustion, forcing the hero to help him continue onward.

Actions

Arkaryn or Krystalas leads the Silvanesti and the heroes across the vast glacial plain. The ice and heavy snow make travel across the Frigid Plains difficult. Blistering cold winds make travel arduous and painful. The normal movement rate is approximately 16 miles per day (half that for smaller-than-man-sized heroes). If there are injured heroes or characters present, they can travel only 10 miles per day to account for their frequent rest periods.

Rules governing movement rates in winter conditions are given in Act One: Scene One. All movement rates on the Frigid Plains are cut by half.

The Silvanesti renegades, though accustomed to the poor climate, are no better equipped for survival than the heroes. Once in a while, the Narrator should have one of the heroes or characters weaken and collapse in the snow. Crossing the plains without succumbing to the cold weather requires a challenging Endurance action. A failed action indicates the hero has collapsed and must rest for at least 1 hour before continuing.

> In AD&D play, each PC must make a Constitution check or suffer fatigue. A failed roll indicates that the character must rest for 2d6 turns or lose one Constitution point. As well, the PC's movement rate drops by three-quarters (minimum 1). A new roll must be made each hour. Constitution can only be regained after rest, at a rate of 1 point per hour.

Due to the harsh winds and savage cold, all physical actions on the Frigid Plains become one degree more difficult than normal. (Thus, a maneuver of average difficulty would become a chal-

lenging maneuver.) The actions described in this section (see below) already include the penalty.

> On the Frigid Plains, AD&D characters without protection from extreme cold (such as a *ring of warmth, protection from cold scroll,* or *resist cold* spell) suffer a non-cumulative –2 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and initiative.

Among the actions which the heroes may attempt are the following:

❖ Hide from the Thanoi
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action ability: Agility or Reason
Opposition ability: Perception

Comments: Success means that the hero has managed to somehow conceal himself from the roving thanoi hunters, either by hiding in the snow or behind an icy outcropping. The hero may attempt to Gain Surprise (see Book One, page 60 of the FIFTH AGE rules) or remain hidden the following round.

Mishap: The hero is detected and cannot attempt to gain surprise. Moreover, the hero is temporarily blinded by blowing snow, suffering a two-degree penalty on any action executed during the following round.

❖ Flee the Thanoi
Difficulty: Daunting (16)
Action ability: Endurance
Opposition ability: Agility

Comments: The hero who succeeds at this action manages to press forward to the point of exhaustion, moving beyond the visual range of the thanoi.

Mishap: The hero presses onward but collapses due to exhaustion. The hero must expend a card from his Hand of Fate to remain conscious; otherwise, he falls unconscious for a number of minutes equal to the face value of a card randomly drawn from the Fate Deck (during which time the thanoi may find him).

❖ Negotiate with the Thanoi
Difficulty: Desperate (20) or see below
Action ability: Presence or Reason
Opposition ability: Reason

Comments: Success indicates that the hero has convinced the thanoi not to attack. The Narrator should make the player determine how the feat was accomplished. For instance, the thanoi may believe that the heroes are mercenaries hired by Gellidus to deliver the Silvanesti renegades to Anghanor for interrogation. The difficulty of this action drops to challenging if one of the heroes happens to speak the thanoi tongue or has magic by which to communicate effectively. The difficulty level drops to easy if the heroes openly display Firestorm's amulet.

Mishap: The thanoi all attack the hero attempting to negotiate unless that hero is wearing Firestorm's amulet.

❖ Resist the Cold
Difficulty: Daunting (16)
Action ability: Spirit
Opposition ability: None

Comments: The hero manages to suppress the numbing pain of the Frigid Plains. Fueled by adrenaline or anger, the hero is able to perform all further actions in this scene without the penalty incurred by the savage climate.

Mishap: The hero is unable to resist the cold and suffers frostbite, which costs him a card from his Hand of Fate in addition to the action penalty.

Characters

Thanoi (walrus men): Lost folk, hostile demeanors, Rabble. Co 6, Ph 8, In 3, Es 4, +8 Dmg +8, Def –3, also thrown weapons (spear/+3), immune to cold/ice. There are two to three thanoi for each hero and Silvanesti in the party.

> **Thanoi** (20+): INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9, swim 15; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+2 (spear) or 1d8 (tusks); SD immune to cold; SZ L (8' tall); ML 14; XP 175; DL6/30. Thanoi suffer 1 extra hp damage per die from fire-based attacks.

Outcome

Whether the heroes defeat the thanoi, surrender to them, or win their allegiance, they eventually arrive within sight of Anghanor. Proceed with Scene Two.

Slain thanoi may be cooked and consumed as food, but the heroes must cut away thick layers of fat to get to the meat (which is tough and low in nutrition). Only heroes with a nature drawn from a card with a red or black aura would consider eating a sentient race. The Silvanesti have learned to stomach almost anything, including unfortunate but edible thanoi. (Heroes whose nature is drawn from a card with a white aura would be offended by the very thought.) The thanoi's thick, leathery skin provides adequate protection against the cold, and heroes who drape themselves in stripped thanoi skins negate the penalty imposed by the adverse climactic conditions.

Scene Two: Wintergale of Anghanor

The heroes approach Anghanor, either by foot or by air. The keep is closely guarded by Gellidus' consort Wintergale, a female adult white dragon with a vain streak and a wicked temper. The heroes must find some way past this terrifying sentinel to enter the keep.

Overview

The heroes either approach Wintergale's domain by land (in the custody of the thanoi, or on their own) or by air (astride the great roc taken from the Sentinel Tower). In either event, Wintergale spots them from her favorite perch on the roof of the keep and engages them.

Getting Started

The Narrator may wish to review the rules detailing dragons and their combat abilities (Book One, pages 108-116).

First Impressions

The Narrator should read the first boxed description to the players if their heroes reach Anghanor by foot (see Scene One above).

> Through the blowing snow, you see a large fortress jutting out of a sheer, mountainous ridge just over a mile away. The fortress looms above the frigid plains and looks both staunch and impregnable. As you draw near, you spot an icy bridge joining the fortress to a jagged escarpment of rock—the bridge no doubt the only safe means of reaching the keep. Atop the great parapet of Anghanor, a huge white lizard peers down upon the plain and lifts its wings into the chill mountain air.

Read the following boxed text if the heroes arrive at Anghanor astride the great roc (see Act Two: Scene Three for details).

The great roc drops through the clouds toward the mountains below, its immense wings bearing down on the keep of Anghanor. The fortress protrudes from the side of a sheer, windworn mountain, joined to the neighboring rock by a chasm-spanning bridge of stone. Circling overhead, you catch the gleam of a dragon's eye as she peers upward into the clouds. Suddenly, from the snow-covered rooftop of the fortress, a white dragon springs upward, her wings catching the cold, biting air.

The Story Continues

The dragon Wintergale (Talystryn) is ever vigilant when it comes to guarding Anghanor's "secret." She takes her responsibility to Gellidus very seriously and does not like strangers approaching the keep. Regardless of how the heroes arrive, Wintergale spots them. If the heroes are accompanied by the thanoi in Scene One, the dragon flies overhead to survey the catch and allow the thanoi to bring the prisoners closer to the keep. If the heroes are traveling alone, Wintergale descends upon them, attacking with her dragon breath and claws. The presence of the great roc startles Wintergale, for she has never seen a bird that could match a dragon in size. However, she tests the roc's mettle by blasting it with her chill breath from a safe distance.

If the heroes obtained Firestorm's amulet in Act Two: Scene Two, they can present this amulet to Wintergale. Her sharp blue eyes recognize the amulet's dragon emblem immediately, and she grudgingly accepts the heroes as agents of Gellidus. (Wintergale is territorial and keen of senses, but not especially bright.) Presented with the amulet, the dragon is under obligation to allow the heroes to enter Anghanor and use the keep as a sanctuary from the cold. If she sees the amulet, Wintergale snaps her head forward to inspect it closely. Once she is certain the amulet is genuine, she allows the heroes to continue unimpeded, returning to her station atop the fortress.

If the heroes failed to obtain Firestorm's amulet, they must fight Wintergale to reach the keep. She does not accept their surrender and either devours them on the spot or freezes them. Frozen heroes are flown to the roof of Anghanor and left there for later consumption or dropped through an icy orifice in the mountaintop (leading to the underground cavern), where the frozen remains are devoured by the creatures living in the interior caves.

If the heroes arrive via the magical roc figurine, they must either command the roc to deposit them on the ground or face Wintergale in the air. If the heroes choose to remain aloft, they risk harm each time the roc is attacked. Any dragon breath used against the roc also damages the roc's passengers, and any heroes held in the roc's talons are dropped several thousand feet if the roc is ordered (by the figurine's owner) to engage the dragon in combat.

Atmosphere

Dragons are widely considered the most fearsome monsters on Krynn, and for good reason. Even if the heroes successfully avoid the overwhelming sense of dragonawe (see "Actions" below), Wintergale should be described as a formidable juggernaut with cunning befitting her reptilian nature. She uses the natural elements to her advantage, stirring up snow and bits of ice with her wings, dropping chunks of ice and stone on the heroes from above, and so forth. Heroes attempting to fight the dragon on the ground suffer the same penalties described in the previous scene. Heroes attempting risky maneuvers while astride the roc (or clutched in its talons) may suffer greater penalties at the Narrator's discretion.

Actions

While the heroes may find themselves called upon to enter combat, this particular scene is structured such that the heroes may reach Anghanor without incurring the dragon's wrath, provided they have Firestorm's amulet.

When Wintergale is first sighted, all heroes and Silvanesti must make an average Spirit (Presence) action to avoid dragonawe (see Book One, Chapter Six, page 155 in the FIFTH AGE rules). Presenting Firestorm's Amulet to Wintergale also requires an action, as the hero or character in possession of the item must find a way to draw attention to himself. Heroes engaged in combat may also attempt to Resist the Cold to negate the action penalties brought on by the extreme temperature (see Scene One).

Any hero or character who strikes Wintergale with *Icebane* incurs the dragon's hatred and wrath. Wintergale is infuriated by the pain of Icebane's wound and viciously attacks the sword wielder until one or the other is slain.

❖ Present Firestorm's Amulet
Difficulty: Easy (4)
Action ability: Presence
Opposition ability: Perception

Comments: Presenting the amulet to Wintergale is enough to assuage the dragon's temper. The amulet identifies the hero (and his colleagues) as emissaries of the Ice Tyrant Gellidus, and even Wintergale realizes that attacking such envoys would be unwise.

Mishap: Wintergale mistakes the hero's attention-getting tactics as a provocation. Wintergale attacks and forces the hero to wait until after the attack before another attempt can be made to display the amulet (at average difficulty this time).

Characters

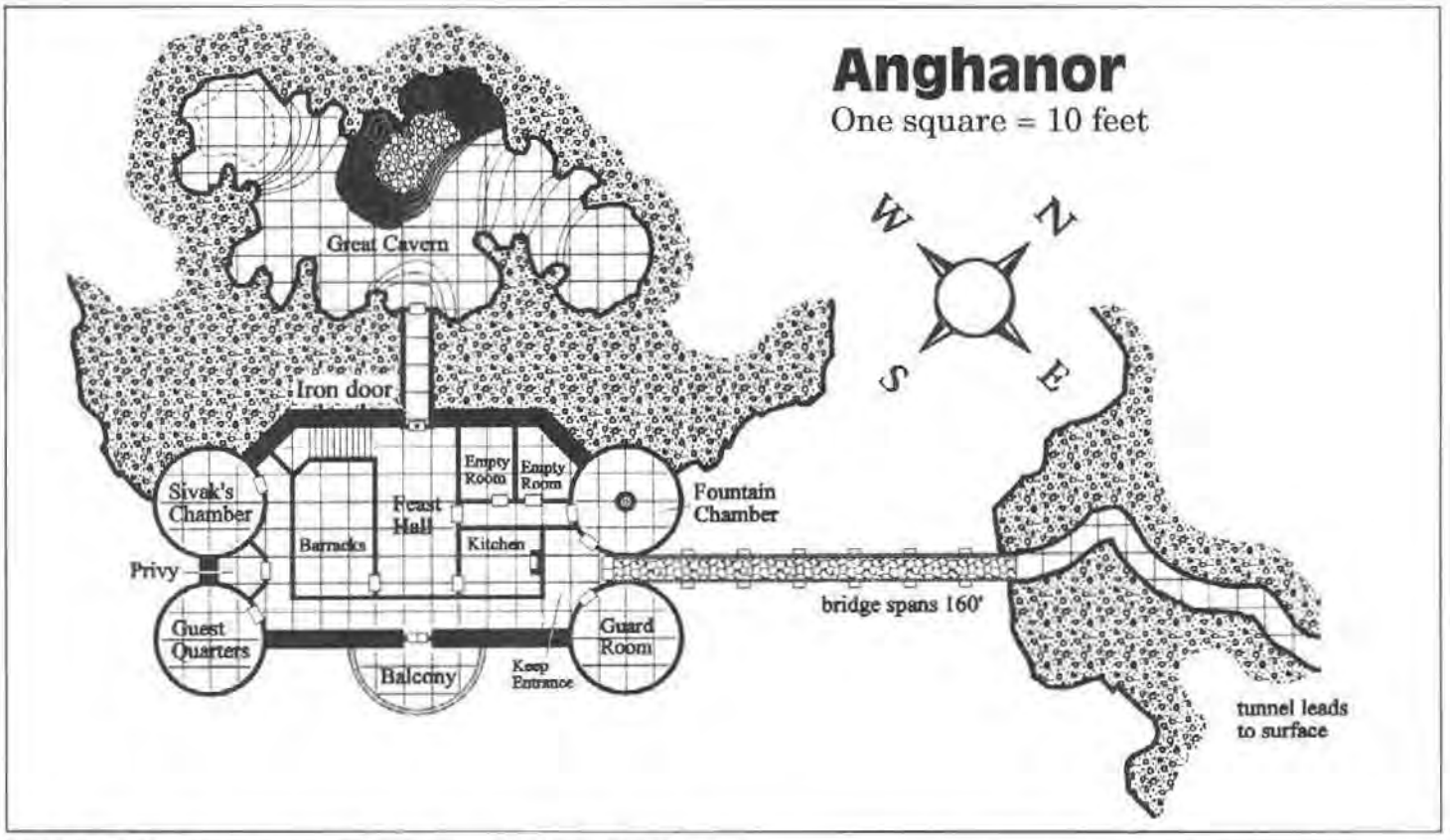
If Wintergale is driven to attack the heroes, any thanoi present from Scene One sides with the white dragon against the heroes (perceiving Wintergale to be the greater threat). Otherwise, the only character present in this scene is the dragon herself.

Wintergale (Talystryn): Mature adult white dragon, female, capricious demeanor. Co 11, Ph 48, In 13, Es 13, Dmg +20, Def –16, also dragon breath, dive attack, sorcery (cryomancy), dragonawe, swallow whole. Wintergale's dragon breath is a cone of super-chilled air and causes damage points equal to her current Physique rating.

Wintergale (Talystryn, mature adult white dragon): INT low (high cunning); AL CE; AC –2; MV 12, fly 40 (C), burrow 6, swim 12; HD 14; hp 91; THAC0 6; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1d6+7/1d6+7/2d8+7; SA breath weapon (Dmg 7d6+7; cone of frost 70' long, 25' wide at the base); tail slap, wing buffet, dragon fear (+1 to save); cast *shield* once/day and *gust of wind* thrice/day; SD impervious to cold; MR 15%; SZ H (54' body, 50' tail); ML 16; XP 13,000; *MM*/69 (dragon, chromatic).

Outcome

If the heroes kill or otherwise circumvent the white dragon, they may continue onward to Anghanor. If they are traveling by foot, the heroes locate a tunnel carved into a nearby escarpment



which leads to a chasm-spanning bridge and the fortress beyond. Heroes astride the roc may simply land on the roof of the fortress and proceed from there. Either way, the Narrator should continue with Scene Three.

Scene Three: White Orbs

If the heroes intend to reach Anghanor on foot, they must enter a tunnel at the base of the mountains and traverse an icy tunnel to reach the chasm bridge leading to the proper entrance. If the heroes arrive at the keep astride the roc, they may land on the roof and take the stairs that lead down to the main level.

Overview

In this scene, the heroes endeavor to penetrate Anghanor and uncover the Ice Tyrant's secret. Deep within the ice-cold fortress is a cavern containing the White Orbs: several dozen white dragon eggs hatched by Gellidus' consorts and left here for safe keeping. To reach the White Orbs, the heroes must defeat the keep's guardians—a band of exiled draconians led by a conniving Sivak named Dargus (pronounced DAR-juss).

Getting Started

The full range of combat abilities available to draconians is listed in Book One of the FIFTH AGE game (pages 106–107). The Narrator may wish to review this section.

First Impressions

The scene begins in the tunnel leading to the chasm bridge or atop the roof. If the heroes approach Anghanor via the tunnel, read the following:

> An icy tunnel snakes upward through the rocky escarpment, reaching its end at a steep precipice formed by a jagged chasm. A stone bridge arches across the windy expanse, its stones coated by a thick layer of ice. Six stone struts hold the bridge aloft, and they appear quite sturdy, but one cannot discount the stiff wind which feels strong enough to push even an ogre into oblivion.

If the heroes begin the scene on the roof, read the following:

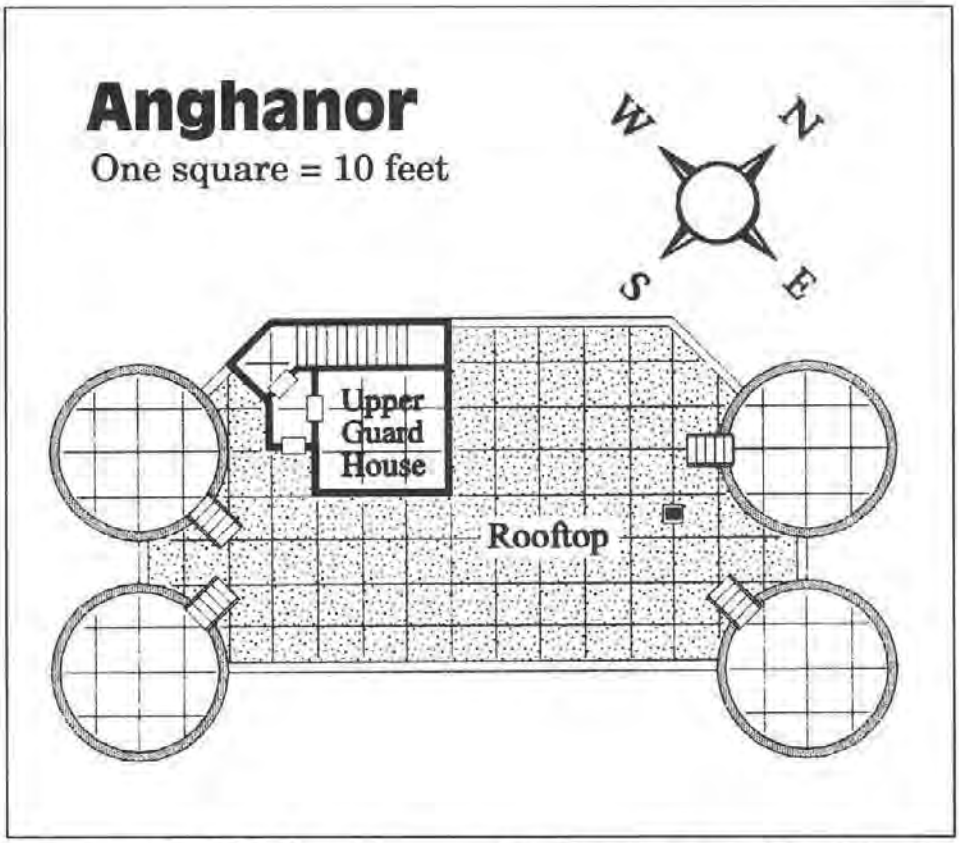
> The roc has carried you safely to the rooftop of Anghanor, which is enclosed on all sides by icy battlements. The wind is not particularly strong here, and there is nothing to keep you from peering over the battlements to view the vast glacier which covers the plains of Southern Ergoth. The snow on the roof has been packed down by the sentinel white dragon. A single door lies half-buried behind a snowdrift.

The Story Concludes

Crossing the chasm bridge to reach the keep is perilous (as described in "Actions" below). Entering the keep via the rooftop is much safer, as the heroes can simply push the snow away from the door. Heroes who peer over the battlements also notice a main-floor balcony 30' below and attempt to lower themselves down to it (as described in the "Actions" section). Regardless of the route, once inside the keep the heroes and their elven allies find the keep a bitterly cold place with magically illuminated, unheated chambers.

The fortress is guarded by draconians who do not attack the heroes if

shown Firestorm's amulet. If they pretend to be the Ice Tyrant's emissaries, the heroes may go virtually anywhere in the fortress, but they are not allowed past the door leading to the great cavern, nor does Dargus (the Sivak commander) relinquish the key to the door. If the heroes attack Dargus, the draconians retaliate in force. If the heroes use enchantment sorcery or some other method to trick the Sivak into relinquishing the key (see "Actions" below), they may use this key to unlock the door and reach the cavern beyond.



Keep of Anghanor

The following areas are keyed to the maps of Anghanor.

Keep Entrance. The double doors leading to the chasm bridge are unlocked but difficult to open. Heroes must attempt an average Strength action to force open the doors. The room beyond is devoid of furnishings save for a large shield hanging on the wall across from the entrance. The shield depicts the emblem of the Ice Tyrant Gellidus—a stylized white dragon against a black background (similar in configuration to the dragon depicted on Firestorm's amulet). Crossed beneath the shield are two silver-tipped spears, neither of which is exceptional.

The noise of the doors opening alerts the draconian guards stationed in the circular chamber to the east. They burst into the room one minute after the heroes enter, attacking if the heroes fail to produce Firestorm's amulet.

Guard Room. Unless they have been summoned elsewhere, eight Baaz and three Kapak draconians occupy this chamber. These guards attack the heroes unless they are shown Firestorm's amulet, in which case they tentatively allow the heroes to pass. They fight to the death unless they are called off by Dargus (who resides in the Sivak's Quarters). The walls of the chamber are lined with bunks, and several banners depicting scenes of battle (between the Knights of Takhisis and the elves of Southern Ergoth) hang from the walls.

Fountain Chamber. A fountain of crisp, fresh water springs from the floor of this circular, magically-lit chamber. The water cascades through the mouth of a stone dragon and spills into a 10' diameter marble basin. The water has natural healing powers, and any person (or monster) who drinks from the spring recovers a number of damage points equal to the value of a randomly-drawn Fate Card. A person can benefit from the spring only once/day, and water that is removed from the fountain loses its magic after one day.

> In the AD&D game, the fountain heals 1d8 hp damage, like the clerical *cure light wounds* spell. It is otherwise identical to the fountain detailed above.

Balcony. This snow-covered platform juts out from the fortress 150' above the Frigid Plains. The view of the plains is extraordinary. Groups of roving thanoi can frequently be seen and heard from this vantage point. Heroes may also hear an occasional huff from the white dragon perched atop the roof.

Feasthall. A large stone table dominates this magically-lit chamber. Surrounding the table are dozens of comfortable chairs, some of which have been smashed or overturned by the draconians. The tabletop is littered with bones and scraps of meat.

Four Baaz draconians are stationed here at all times, guarding the Iron Door that leads to the Great Cavern. The draconians are positioned throughout the chamber and attack intruders on sight. If the heroes have Firestorm's amulet, the draconians watch them closely but refrain from attacking unless the heroes tamper with the locked door.

Iron Door. This heavy iron door built into the northwest wall of the Feasthall is magically locked, and Dargus carries the only "key"—a small iron sphere which must be inserted into a cup-shaped indentation in the middle of the door. The Ice Tyrant Gellidus has enspelled the door so that it is impervious to physical attacks and sorcery, except for the most powerful transmutation magic. Certainly nothing the heroes possess can bypass the door, and there is no visible locking mechanism to tamper with.

> The iron door is resistant to *knock* spells and *dispel magic*. A *transmute metal to wood* spell enables characters to hack through the portal, and a *disintegrate* spell removes the door entirely. It is otherwise resistant to physical force and magic.

Kitchen. This chamber is strewn with refuse, debris, and broken furnish-

ings. Copper dishware lies scattered from corner to corner, and the floor is covered with soot from the hearth. There is nothing to salvage here.

Empty Rooms. These areas were once used for storage, but they now stand empty.

Barracks. Heavy wooden bunks line the walls of this large, unlit chamber. The room is large enough to sleep over 40 fighting men with equipment. At the moment, there is nothing of particular interest here.

Guest Quarters. This magically-lit chamber is adorned with four inanimate statues depicting armored knights with swords held high. Opposite the door rests a heavy wooden bed frame, above which hangs a green and gold tapestry depicting the lavish elven city of Silvamori at a time prior to the Age of Mortals, taken from Daltigoth. The tapestry is quite valuable (500 steel pieces).

Sivak's Quarters. This chamber is occupied by the Sivak and his Bozak draconian lieutenants. Dargus and his henchmen are feeding on the blubbery remains of a thanoi offspring borne from the Frigid Plains. The draconians take offense toward any intrusion, attacking immediately. If the heroes show Dargus the amulet taken from Firestorm, the Sivak orders the heroes to leave, offering them no special considerations. If necessary, he fights with twin long swords, while the Bozaks rely on their *flamespit* spells (see "Characters" below) and scimitars.

Dargus wears the key to the door leading to the Great Cavern around his neck. The "key" is a 3" diameter iron sphere fastened to a steel chain and has no other special properties. Dargus has orders from Gellidus not to relinquish the key to anyone. If the heroes ask for it, he attacks them.

The walls of Dargus' chamber are adorned with banners depicting various chromatic dragons (red, blue, black, green, and white). The mosaic floor is patterned to resemble a map of Southern Ergoth, with several key landmarks indicated by stones of certain colors. The floor is also littered with gnawed bones, tusks, and thanoi cartilage.

Privy. This chamber contains little of interest or value.

Great Cavern. Icy stalactites hang from the 50' high ceiling of this roughly-hewn cavern. The floor is uneven and rises to the west and east. In the middle of the cavern, the floor drops away to form a 30' deep pit, its sides icy and sheer. A cool rush of arctic air enters the cavern from the west.

The large western alcove is partially open to the sky, as there is a large hole in the 50' high ceiling leading to the outside. This opening is concealed from the outside by powerful spectramancy magic (an illusion) cast by Gellidus himself.

The large eastern alcove can be reached by climbing several natural tiers. Lurking in the shadows of this icy cave are two white dragon wyrmlings who recently escaped the confines of the pit. They have since been commissioned by Wintergale to guard the unhatched eggs in the pit and attack any heroes who approach them or get too close to the eggs. Stored at the back of this cave is Wintergale's treasure pile: 1,940 steel pieces, 3,305 gold pieces, 10,866 silver pieces, six frozen *healing* potions (each heals 5 damage points when thawed and imbibed), a *staff of searing* (four charges; emits a 60' long searing ray of heat which causes 10 damage points per hit), and a dwarven *shield of fame* known as *Barrakas* (–6 defensive bonus; reduces damage from dragon breath by half).

> In the AD&D game, *Barrakas* is a dwarven *shield +2* with the added power of protecting the user against various breath weapon attacks (save for half or quarter damage). Wintergale's trove also contains 1,940 pp, 3,305 gp, 10,866 sp, five frozen potions—*extra-healing* (×3), *healing* (×2)—a *ring of warmth*, and a *wand of fire* with four charges remaining.

The central pit contains two dozen white dragon eggs, discounting the two which have recently hatched. The remaining eggs are kept cool by a thick layer of frosted snow. Gellidus' eggs resemble large (roughly 20" in diameter) white pearls and are resilient, requiring 6 damage points to break. Breaking the eggs does not ensure the death of the unborn dragons. Any Silvanesti who are present endeavor to set fire to them (assuming fire is available) or hack the unhatched dragons to pieces. Any attempt to reach or damage the eggs causes the dragon wyrmlings in the eastern alcove to attack.

> In AD&D terms, each dragon egg can withstand 10 hp damage before breaking. Edged weapons inflict –1 hp damage per die.

Gellidus has ensorcelled the pit that contains the eggs. Any non-dragon that enters the pit alerts every loyal white dragon within the Ice Tyrant's domain, including Wintergale and Gellidus himself. If Wintergale has returned to her perch atop the keep, it takes her three minutes to enter the cavern via the opening in the roof of the western alcove. Her lithe, serpentine form allows her to drop through the opening in the roof, landing hard upon the cavern floor but suffering no damage. If he obtains *Barrakas* and the magical ring from Wintergale's trove, Arkaryn (or Krystalas) tries to hold off the dragon using *Icebane* and *Barrakas*. If Wintergale reaches the pit, she peers down the hole and belches forth a cloud of super-chilled air that does not affect the eggs but has a good chance of freezing any warm-blooded creature to death.

If the pit is violated, Gellidus himself does not embark for Anghanor but dispatches a legion of ogres from Daltigoth as well as two other consorts (Icicle and Shiver, each with statistics similar to Wintergale's). However, the dragons do not arrive for several hours, and the ogres take two days to cross the Southern Ergoth glacier under forced march.

Upper Guardhouse. This room contains three Kapak draconians and one Bozak draconian. The Kapaks attack with short swords after licking them with their poisonous saliva, while the Bozak snares the heroes in magical webs or attacks with *flamespit* spells.

Aside from the draconians, this chamber contains a rack of ordinary spears (several dozen), a hanging banner depicting the Knights of Takhisis emblem, and a red dragon's horn (worth 1,000 steel coins) held in a carved wooden stand. When the keep served the Knights of Takhisis, the hollow dragon's horn was used by guards on the roof to sound the approach of invaders, alerting the rest of the fortress.

Rooftop. This is where the dragon Wintergale resides when not scouring her domain for signs of intrusion or defending Gellidus' unhatched brood in the Great Cavern. The snow atop the roof has been packed down by the dragon except a few drifts near the raised tower battlements and the Upper Guardhouse. There is no treasure here.

Atmosphere

The heroes can conceivably reach the Great Cavern without precipitating an all-out battle with Dargus' draconians if they use Firestorm's amulet and claim to be envoys sent by Gellidus. The climax of the adventure takes place in the cavern as the heroes uncover Gellidus' dragon eggs and Wintergale tries to prevent the heroes and the Silvanesti from destroying them. Powerfully dramatic music filled with percussive crescendos would be especially appropriate here.

Actions

There are countless actions the heroes may take once inside Anghanor—too many too account for in this adventure. The Narrator must use sound judgment when determining the difficulty of an unexpected action, leaning in favor of the heroes where necessary. Below are a few actions which may prove necessary to reach the fortress and secure the key to the underground cavern. All other actions should be handled judiciously by the Narrator as needs arise.

❖ Crossing the Chasm Bridge
Difficulty: Easy (4)
Action ability: Agility
Opposition ability: None

Comments: The icy bridge arches over the chasm, but any hero who makes a successful action can cross the bridge safely. If the hero fails the action, he slips and must spend a minute regaining his footing, at which point another attempt can be made at average difficulty (8).

Mishap: A mishap for this action indicates that the hero has been swept off the icy surface of the bridge by the wind. Any hero who plunges into the chasm loses four cards from his Hand of Fate; if the hero has fewer than five cards, he is killed by the fall.

> Crossing the bridge requires a successful Dexterity check. Failure indicates the PC was swept off the bridge to his death (barring the use of feather fall, levitate or similar spells).

❖ Scaling a Wall
Difficulty: Challenging (12) or Average (8)
Action ability: Dexterity
Opposition ability: None

Comments: Anghanor's walls are icy and difficult to scale, but heroes may wish to climb from the main floor balcony to the roof (or vice versa) or use their climbing skills to safely descend the pit in the Great Cavern. If the action is successful, the climb was completed without injury. If the wall is roughly-hewn, consider the action of average difficulty; if the wall is smooth, the action should be considered challenging. Failure indicates that the hero may make a second attempt at a difficulty level one degree higher; if the second attempt fails, the hero simply cannot scale the surface.

Mishap: The hero falls. The hero either suffers 3 damage points for every 10' fallen or, at the player's discretion, loses the card of lowest value from his Hand of Fate plus one additional card for every 25' fallen.

> The AD&D rules for climbing sheer, icy surfaces are given in the *PHB*. Only thieves may attempt to scale smooth walls without mountaineering equipment.

❖ Charming or Bribing the Sivak
Difficulty: Varies (see below)
Action ability: Spirit
Opposition ability: Spirit

Comments: If a hero tries to charm Dargus with a *mentalism* spell, the difficulty level varies depending on the way in which the spell is invoked. (See Chapter Five, Book One of the FIFTH AGE rules.) Any attempt to bribe the Sivak should be considered a daunting Spirit action unless Dargus is offered a weapon of renown (or greater), in which case the difficulty level drops to challenging.

Mishap: Dargus attacks the hero immediately, fighting until he or the hero is slain.

Characters

To reach Gellidus' eggs, the heroes must overcome two white dragon wyrmlings and the draconian guards. The final battle in the Great Cavern may also involve Wintergale.

Blizzard and Frostbite: White dragon wyrmlings, vicious demeanors. Co 8, Ph 15, In 4, Es 4, Dmg +7, Def –4, also dragon breath, dive attack, sorcery (cryomancy). The dragons' breath of icy-cold air causes damage equal to their current Physique.

> **Blizzard** and **Frostbite** (white dragon hatchlings): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12, fly 40 (C), burrow 6, swim 12; HD 5; hp 31, 26; THAC0 15; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1d6+1/1d6+1/2d8+1; SA breath weapon (Dmg 1d6+1; cone of frost 70' long, 25' wide at the base), tail slap; SD impervious to cold; SZ M (4' body, 3' tail); ML 15; XP 3,000; *MM*/69 (dragon, chromatic).

Twelve Baaz draconians: Draconians, vigilante demeanors, Rabble. Co 8, Ph 6, In 6, Es 7, Dmg +4, Def –3, also thrown weapons (spear/+3). When a Baaz is slain, its body turns to stone. The hero who delivered the killing blow must attempt an average Agility action lest the weapon remain trapped in the petrified corpse for one hour, until the draconian's remains crumble to dust.

> **Baaz draconians** (12): INT average; AL LE; AC 4; MV 6, glide 15; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 or 1d8 (long sword); MR 20%; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120; DL6/28. When a baaz reaches 0 hp, it turns to stone. If anyone hits the stone form of the baaz, he must make a Dexterity check at –3 or his weapon becomes stuck. The statue crumbles to dust 1d4 rounds after turning to stone, freeing the lodged weapon.

Six Kapak draconians: Draconians, cruel demeanors, Rabble. Co 8, Ph 6, In 5, Es 7, Dmg +3 (short sword), Def –3. A Kapak's poisonous saliva causes paralysis unless the victim makes a challenging Endurance action. Kapaks are known to coat their blades with the saliva. When a Kapak dies, it dissolves into a 10' diameter pool of acid that causes 5 damage points to exposed flesh.

> **Kapak draconians** (6): INT average; AL LE; AC 4; MV 6, glide 15; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite) or 1d6 (short sword); SA poison (causes paralysis for 2d6 turns); SD acid pool; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 15; XP 270; DL6/29. Kapaks coat their blades with poisonous saliva (requiring one round). The venom lasts three rounds but affects only the first opponent struck. A kapak reduced to 0 hp turns into a 10' diameter acid pool which dissolves material at a rate of 1" per round and causes 1d8 hp damage.

Three Bozak draconians: Draconians, sadistic demeanors, Rabble. Co 6, Ph 6, In 7 (49), Es 7, Dmg +5 (scimitar), Def –4, also webs (escape requires an average Agility action), aeromancy, pyromancy. Bozaks crumble into dust when slain, leaving behind a pile of bones which explode one minute later (5 damage points to every creature in melee range). The Bozaks have 49 spell points each and favor a pyromantic spell called *flamespit* (see below).

***Flamespit* spell:** This spell allows the Bozak to "spit" forth gouts of fire (near missile range) causing 5 damage points each. The effect is instantaneous and affects single targets within range. Flammable objects are alighted, and individuals set aflame must put out the flames immediately or suffer equal damage in consequent combat exchanges. This spell has a difficulty level of 12. Each casting of this spell costs 12 spell points.

Bozak draconians (3): INT high; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6, glide 15; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 or 1d8 (scimitar); SA spells; SD +2 to saves; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 16; XP 420; DL6/28. Spells: *change self, icebolt* (variation of *magic missile* but otherwise identical in effect), *shield; flamespit, web.* When reduced to 0 hp, a bozak crumbles from its bones which then explode for 1d6 hp damage (affecting everyone in a 10' range; no saving throw). The *flamespit* spell allows the bozak to spit a 20' stream of magical fire at a single target once/round for two rounds, inflicting 2d4 hp damage per gout (save for half damage).

Dargus: Sivak draconian, aggressive demeanor, Novice. Co 10, Ph 12, In 7, Es 7, Dmg +12 (two long swords/+8), Def –5. The Sivak attacks with both swords freely and bursts into flame when slain, inflicting upon its killer 10 damage points from burns.

Dargus (sivak draconian): INT high; AL NE; AC 1; MV 6, glide 15; HD 6; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6/2d6 (claw/claw/bite) or 1d8+3/1d8+3 (swords); SA +2 damage with melee weapons (Strength bonus); SD +2 to saving throws; MR 20%; SZ L; ML 17; XP 1,400; DL7/30. Dargus wields two *long swords +1* and wears the "key" to the Iron Door around his neck. When Dargus slays a humanoid of his own size or smaller, he can assume the appearance of the victim and maintain this form until he chooses to revert to his true state. When reduced to 0 hp, Dargus bursts into flame, causing 2d4 hp damage to all within 10' (no saving throw).

Outcome

If the heroes and the Silvanesti renegades destroy the dragon eggs, they have only a few hours to escape Anghanor before Gellidus' dragon consorts arrive. The heroes may seek refuge inside the keep itself, but in two days the fortress is approached by several dozen ogres from Daltigoth. A safer locale might be the Sentinel Tower—a place all but ignored by the Ice Tyrant's marshals—but this structure offers only temporary solstice. It's only a matter of time before Icicle or Shiver spots the tower while scouring the plains for signs of the escaped dragonslayers.

The most expedient route of escape is the roc figurine taken from the Sentinel Tower. The heroes and their Silvanesti allies can use the roc to deliver them

anywhere in Southern Ergoth. However, the figurine can be used for only eight hours at a time and has but a few charges. If he is still alive, Arkaryn recommends that they head south over the Last Gaard Mountains (back toward Silvamori) or west toward Castle Eastwatch, a Solamnic outpost. If Krystalas has ascended to lead the Silvanesti by virtue of Arkaryn's death, he uses the roc to travel westward, knowing there are other Silvanesti hiding along Southern Ergoth's warmer coastline and on the westward island of Cristyne. Krystalas knows that Gellidus will not rest until he finds those responsible for the destruction of his brood.

Epilogue: Winter Heroes

If the heroes were instrumental in the completion of the quest, the Silvanesti honor them by inviting the heroes to join their struggle for freedom. Relationships which may have formed between the heroes and the elves may continue to blossom (or perhaps degenerate) in future adventures set in the Ice Tyrant's domain or the neighboring lands. If Arkaryn and Krystalas were both slain in the course of the adventure and the heroes agree to help the Silvanesti in their campaign, the surviving elves may honor the heroes further by giving them *Icebane*. Arkaryn's sword has a proud legacy, and the elves can think of no better way to show their friendship than to bestow the weapon upon one who is deserving.

If Arkaryn is still alive, he keeps his sword but promises to accompany the heroes wherever their adventures take them, serving them as a warrior or advisor when required. The Narrator may even allow a player to assume the role of Arkaryn in future FIFTH AGE adventures. Finally, heroes all go up one Quest after completing this adventure. If this takes them into a new category of Reputation, they can attempt to improve in one of their six abilities, as explained in Chapter One of the Book of the Fifth Age (Book One in the FIFTH AGE boxed set).

The PCs should receive 10,000–15,000 XPs for destroying the white dragon eggs, to be split evenly among the characters. Additional experience points may be given for exceptional role-playing and ingenuity, at the DM's discretion. Ω

9 out of 10 mice prefer it.

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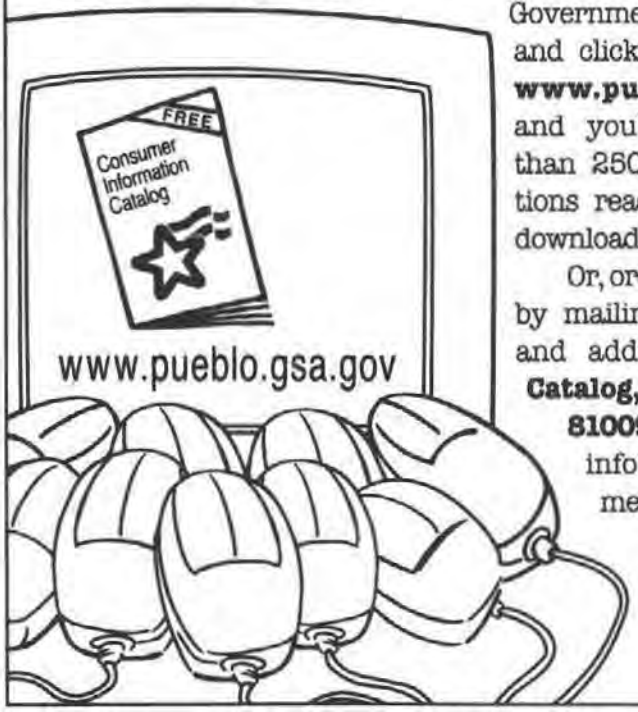

U.S. General Services Administration

Our thanks to this issue's playtesters!

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Side Treks

BY LISA DOYLE

Artwork by John Stanko

"Reflections" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure for 3–6 characters of levels 3–5 (about 20 total levels). The DM should create a town map to suit his campaign.

Adventure Background

In the past five months, four citizens have mysteriously vanished from the town of Aberdale. These people disappeared in the middle of the night with no warning nor any signs of struggle. A few neighbors witnessed the individuals leave their houses and just stroll away.

In the caverns below Aberdale, a will o'wisp has captured a gibbering mouther. The chaotic emanations of the mouther's victims provides nourishment for the wisp. The missing people were lured by the will o'wisp to fatten the mouther. The PCs have stopped in Aberdale, either en route to another location, in search of adventure, or for some reason specific to the DM's campaign. The will o'wisp believes the town will not investigate if visitors disappear and therefore selects the PCs for its next victims.

1. The Tallow Candle Inn.

> Bustling warmth and smoky light greet your entrance. Townsfolk in rough tunics lean close together over pine tables, barely noticing your arrival. Their tense, nervous chatter fills the room like hail on a slate roof.

Although the inn is busy, the PCs have no trouble finding a table. They may order common food and drink for the prices listed in the *Player's Handbook*. The innkeeper and one waitress serve all the tables. When the innkeeper realizes that the PCs are visitors, he suggests that they rent a room. The inn has six rooms available at a cost of 2 sp per room each night.

No matter where the PCs sit, they overhear a group discussing the mysterious disappearances. All of the townsfolk are wondering who will be next to vanish. If the PCs ask, the townsfolk know the following information:

- The disappearances take place at night, and there is no evidence of struggle or kidnapping and no warning that these people were going to disappear.
- A few people have seen the victims leave their houses late at night. They just walked out as if going for a stroll into the hills outside of town. Only one person had the courage to follow, and she vanished too.
- A ghostly light has been seen at the edge of the woods on the same nights that each person vanished.

The people of Aberdale also have their own theories about the disappearances. Roll a 1d6 to determine which rumor the PCs hear:

Roll Result:

1. "Little Sarah was killed a year ago by bandits. Rumor has it that her ghost is restless and looks for a champion to avenge her untimely death."

2. "At first I'd a'said that young Delann and Mirlo were running off together. Everyone knew they were involved, if ya know what I mean. And I'd a'thought that old Prestor might've gone to visit family. But it's been months and there hasn't been any word from 'im since."

3. "I think there's some sort'a gate out there that leads to riches untold. Maybe those people aren't coming back 'cause they don't want to."

4. "My great-grandfather told me of a monster like a giant insect that kills crops and tunnels through the ground. He said it killed two people before being driven off. Maybe one of those creatures is here."

5. "The weather's been dry lately, and the eastern fields are dying. Dunno if it's got anything to do with the disappearances, but it's weird."

DM Note: The gibbering mouther's chemical secretions are seeping into the soil and killing the crops.

6. "Bandits may be back in the woods luring people away to join them. That'd explain why there's no sign of struggle. They may be planning to sack the town soon. I think we should prepare for a full-scale fight, but no one wants to listen. They think its some sort of ghost."

DM Note: If the PCs explore the eastern fields after hearing rumor 5, proceed to Encounter **2.** Otherwise skip to Encounter **3.**

2. Eastern Fields.

> Lush vibrant fields, ready for harvest, surround most of the town. Here to the east, however, the crops are dried, dead stalks. The soil is rocky, gritty, and tinged with blue. A scent, reminiscent of soured fruit, clings to the breeze.

Between the fields is a rocky spur rising slightly above the dead vegetation. If the PCs search the rocks, they find the entrance to the caverns (Encounter **4**). The strange scent and blue coloration originate from the hole.

The will o'wisp notices that the PCs are investigating and follows them invisibly.

3. Guiding Light.

DM Note: If the PCs don't investigate the eastern fields before dark, this encounter takes place wherever the PCs rest for the night. Read the following passage to the PC with the highest intelligence.

> You wake from a sound sleep and strain your eyes to see in the deep darkness. "Mnnn. Nnaii ... Aid ..." The ghostly, buzzing voice focuses your attention toward the northwest corner of the room. You reach for your weapons even though you don't sense anyone there.
>
> A distorted spectral face appears in the room. "He-lp ... me ..."
>
> The disembodied head floats in the corner, its glowing features barely discernible as a nose, mouth, and eyes. The head fades away and a hand forms in its place. The hand flattens and waves you to follow before it becomes a drifting wisp of smoke.

Anyone in the area can see the apparition. The will o'wisp is confident that its gibbering mouther can absorb as many victims as it brings. Therefore, it appears to any number of PCs. The wisp intends to keep the PCs curious with a variety of shapes, sounds, and lights in order to lure them to the cave entrance in the eastern fields. The entire party should be encouraged to follow the wisp.

Will o'wisp: INT exceptional; AL CE; AC –8; fly 18 (A); HD 9; hp 56; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2–16; SA electricity; SD invisibility at will except in combat, *protection from magic;* MR only affected by *protection from evil, magic missile,* and *maze;* SZ S (2'); ML 17; XP 3,000; *MM*/361.

4. Crystal Chaos. If the PCs are led to the cave by the will o'wisp, read the following:

> Your ephemeral guide leads you to a dark outcropping. It flares briefly and slowly sinks to the ground, its dim glow revealing a small hole about two feet wide hidden in oddly blue soil.

The following descriptions are experienced by any PC entering the cave, regardless of whether they find the cave themselves or are led by the wisp.

> The hole draws you into a spiral that gently curls downward. Puddles of water reflect images of natural sculptures around you. You must carefully maneuver around small outcroppings to make your way to the end of this natural passage to a large portal.
>
> In the next chamber, exquisite beauty surrounds you. Light flickers off pillars and cascades off stone to flow around the walls like long wavy locks. A myriad of color washes the walls with gem-like splendor. In the distance, you hear the gentle murmuring of an underground waterfall.

This is the home of the gibbering mouther. If the PCs are being led by the will o'wisp, it turns invisible and then follows them deeper into the cave. Once past the main chamber mentioned in the description, the cavern branches out into a small maze. Every passage contains alcoves, dead ends, and interconnections. It is easy for those not familiar with caves to become lost. Regardless of where the PCs wander, they eventually encounter the mouther. After a few minutes, read the following to the party:

> The murmuring waterfall is no longer so soft and soothing. Odd harmonics echo off the walls. The murmur rises and alters into a cacophony of strident whistles, booming drums, resonant crashes, and uneven screams. The clangor echoes past your ears, piercing your mind, and forcing you to claw at your temples. A sweet yet acrid stench assaults your nostrils. Twisted eyes peer at you from reflections in the stone. The eyes intermix with rows of teeth before all images dissolve in a wave of distortion. Words force themselves into your awareness and jumble before you can make sense of them. Soon you are no longer certain where your thoughts end and this madness begins.

The mouther is upon the PCs. Each PC must make a save vs. spells with a –2 penalty against the mental projections of the mouther. If PCs fail their save, roll a 1d8 and consult the chart below to determine their reactions:

Roll Result:

1. Wander aimlessly for one round.
2–5. Stand motionless, stunned for one round.
6–7. Attack the nearest living creature for one round.
8. Run in fear for two rounds.

Continued on page 65

THE UNKINDNESS OF RAVENS

BY JASON KUHL

Nevermore

Artwork by Terry Dykstra
Cartography by Rob Lazzaretti

Still living and writing in New Haven, Connecticut (the home of the New Haven Ravens!), Jason dedicates "The Unkindness of Ravens"—the culmination of a trip to London, a newspaper article, reading Poe, and listening to the crows squawk outside his window at work—to his brother JR, originator of the "shiny object idea."

"The Unkindness of Ravens" is an AD&D® adventure for a well-balanced party of 4–6 player characters of levels 3–5 (about 19 total levels). As the whole of the adventure occurs in a small castle along the road between two cities, the DM can place it anywhere he chooses; all that is required is that the castle be somewhat removed from civilization. While it takes place in a generic AD&D setting, "The Unkindness of Ravens" can also be easily and simply inserted into an ongoing RAVENLOFT® campaign.

Beginning the Adventure

It is not a night to be abroad. Nonetheless, the PCs, weary from their latest adventure, find themselves traveling along a road through a torrential downpour. Lightning leaps from sky to earth; the clothes of the characters are soaked, and their bones are cold. The wind howls about them. Ahead, through the sheets of rain, one PC sees a warm light upon a hill along the road. As they approach, the PCs see that the light comes from the windows of a small fortified castle atop the hill. Slogging through the mud, they approach the front gate. Knocking or calling at the gate produces a guard upon the walls. After asking a few rudimentary questions (names, business, etc.), he disappears for a few moments. The doors then open, allowing the PCs to enter. Any mounts and/or pack-animals are led away by a liveryman, and the PCs are shown into the keep itself.

For the DM

Crawford Manor has a history as strange and shadowed as the raven-nooks that permeate its walls. The central part of the manor (known as the White Tower) was originally built along a forest path in some long-forgotten kingdom. In later years it was abandoned, and it remained so even after the forest path had become a major highway. It would have perhaps crumbled completely into dust if a knight

of the realm by the name of Bertram Crawford had not spied the derelict tower one day as he came down the road. Later, after many famous deeds, Crawford requested that his liege grant him the tower as a place where he could settle—as well as keep the road under friendly eye for his lord. The lord agreed, and Crawford restored and expanded the tower into a castle, using funds he had acquired during his adventuring days. For the workmanship, Crawford called in a favor from a neighboring dwarf-king who had once hired Crawford during a particularly nasty war. Six expert stonemasons arrived and completed the tower. These dwarves loved their creation so much that they spent their remaining days at Crawford Manor.

Crawford also called on another favor while the castle was being built. Years before, Crawford had rescued a wounded wereraven from being burned at the stake in a backwater village. He tended to the wereraven and returned him to his people in a forest some miles away. These creatures thanked Crawford and told him that they would grant him a boon in return; he deferred the offer—until the creation of the castle. A warrior all his life, Crawford felt the oncoming dusk of old age and knew that he could not defend his lands and family indefinitely. So, he returned to the forest and asked the wereravens to protect his castle and family after his death. They agreed, choosing six of their strongest to be bound to the castle forever. Thus the first steward, blacksmith, chamberwoman, cook, grounds keeper, and man-at-arms were appointed to Crawford Manor. To protect the wereravens from the hunter's arrow, Bertram issued only one command: that no one ever harm or kill a raven, crow, or blackbird on his lands, under penalty of death. Only the dwarves and Bertram knew that the protectors were anything but servants, and all of them took that secret to the grave.

Recently, however, one other creature has discovered the secret: an evil magic-wielding scarecrow known as "Mr. Gaunt." Once a good-aligned hedge wizard, Mr. Gaunt lived in semi-solitude, augmenting his meager lifestyle by curing the colds, insomnia, and other minor complaints of the villagers in a farming town not far from his home. However, late one summer night after a period of natural drought and pestilence, the villagers, incensed by the speeches of a petty demagogue blaming Mr. Gaunt for their ills, stormed his cottage and set it on fire, burning him alive inside. Filled with rage and betrayal, Mr. Gaunt's spirit was unable to rest and so inhabited the form of a farmer's scarecrow. One by one, the hate-filled monster hunted down the villagers and slew them. Eventually, his revenge complete, Mr. Gaunt found himself unwilling to leave his new immortal body, and he now wanders the earth, causing woe while continuing his magical researches when he can.

A few days ago, while passing through a wood near the manor, a raven swept down upon Mr. Gaunt, attracted by the shiny glint of his *amulet of protection +4*. In an instant, the raven seized the amulet and flapped off into the sky. Furious at losing so valuable an object, Mr. Gaunt quickly learned of Crawford Manor and its large raven population. Correctly assuming that the thieving bird was from the manor, Mr. Gaunt *polymorphed* himself into a black cat and infiltrated the household. He soon discovered a secret underground vault and there came upon the spirits of the six dwarves who built the manor; they informed him of the wereravens employed by the Crawfords. Knowing that the wereravens have control over their mundane-blackbird cousins, Mr. Gaunt decided to attack—one by one—each wereraven until he learns the whereabouts of his *amulet,* which he is sure has been secreted somewhere within the castle by the raven that took it. Unfortunately, while the wereravens certainly communicate with the avians of Crawford Manor, they are by no means aware of everything that the birds do. Thus, it is not surprising that the wereravens of Crawford Manor have no idea who Mr. Gaunt is, what or where his *amulet* is, or even how it came to be hidden at the castle—a fact bound to frustrate the evil scarecrow.

A Midnight Dreary

Once inside the castle, the PCs are shown to large common rooms (featuring four beds each) where they can dry off and change into fresh clothing. Soon, a castle page arrives to inform the PCs that they are cordially invited to dine this evening with Sir Crawford and his family. No weapons or armor are allowed at the table. Dry clothing is provided if a PC has none.

The page accompanies the PCs to the dining hall. Read the following to the players:

> Walking through a set of double-doors, you enter a large dining hall. The room is lit by a fire burning in the fireplace to your left as well as by candelabras spaced about the chamber. Above the fireplace is a large portrait featuring a burly man with a bushy black beard dressed in white and ebony. Bushy black eyebrows frown beneath a bald pate. His weathered skin and eyes show him as a man who has seen much, but also as a man not without some humor.
>
> There is an inscription engraved in the mantle of the fireplace. A huge oak table takes up much of the room, with chairs enough to accommodate at least two dozen people. At this moment however, there are only three seated at the table, and the handsome man seated at the table's head has risen to address you.
>
> "Welcome," says the man, "I am Sir Inghram Crawford, lord of Crawford Manor. I am pleased that you are able to join us for dinner on this terrible night."
>
> A low rumble of thunder shakes the castle walls.

Sir Inghram Crawford is a ruggedly handsome man in his late forties. Like all Crawfords, Inghram spent much of his youth training to be a knight before heading off along the road in search of adventure. When news of his father's death reached him, he returned to Crawford Manor to settle down and take on the responsibility of being a landowner—collecting taxes, protecting the citizens from bandits and monsters, etc.). He also married the daughter of a fellow knight; however, she died during the birth of their second child, Bran. Inghram loved her deeply and mourns her loss, but he finds comfort by devoting himself to their two children.

Inghram is a *bon vivant* who enjoys good company, especially that of adventurers and other men and women of action. However, he is also an even-handed lord of the surrounding region, and not a man whose courtesy should be abused.

Sir Inghram Crawford (7th-level human fighter): AL LG; AC 9; MV 12; F7; hp 45; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; S 16 (+1 dmg), D 15, C 14, I 14,

W 16, Ch 17; ML 16; *long sword +1, ring of fire resistance.* When prepared for battle, Inghram wears chain mail and carries a *shield +1* (AC 2).

Before asking them to be seated, Sir Crawford introduces the PCs to the other two people at the dining table.

The first is Inghram's daughter, Alida. She is a striking 17-year-old woman with long, jet-black hair. As the eldest child, she can expect to assume control of Crawford Manor upon her father's death; however, she first must achieve knighthood, and then—following family tradition—spend a few years on the road adventuring.

Her father has given her preliminary training in the ways of the warrior.

Alida (human fighter): AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 12, D 16, C 13, I 15, W 9, Ch 17; ML 14; short sword. When dressed for battle, Alida is equipped with leather armor and a shield (AC 5).

The last person at the table is Griswell, Inghram's friend and advisor. He is a fierce-looking man, with deep black hair (graying on the sides) and a Van Dyke beard. His features are sharp, and his eyes are sharper still. He dresses in gray robes.

Griswell is Inghram's distant cousin, and in their youth they adventured together. While good-natured, Griswell is a suspicious person and does not trust easily; however, he is honest, honorable, and fearful of little. It is for all of these qualities that Inghram appointed him as his counselor.

Griswell (6th-level human wizard): AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; W6; hp 20; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 10, D 15, C 16, I 17, W 16, Ch 14; ML 16; *ring of protection +2, ring of spell storing* (*Melf's acid arrow, mirror image,* and *blink* cast at 6th-level), dagger.

Spells: *burning hands, detect magic, protection from evil, shield; invisibility, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; dispel magic, hold person.*

Sir Crawford's youngest child, Bran is a sullen, untalkative boy and did not wish to eat dinner this evening.

At this point, dinner is served. If the PCs express interest in the portrait over the fire, or if Sir Crawford notices the PCs studying the portrait, read the following:

> "Ah," says the lord of the manor, "I see you are taken with my ancestor, Sir Bertram Crawford. He is the founder of our line, and he built this castle. Son of a blacksmith, the old rascal, struck out on his own to become a famous adventurer. A hero among heroes, in his day."

If the PCs examine the mantlepiece, they see the following legend:

The Death of Ravens Shalt Thou Abhor, Lest the Crawford Line be Nevermore.

Any PC bold enough to ask about the engraving receives this response:

> Inghram laughs, and your three hosts exchange knowing glances. "The couplet is nothing more than fodder for kitchen gossip. It's just some old prophecy."
>
> "Sir Bertram," he nods toward the painting, "was wacky about ravens and crows. Simply loved them. So, when he built the castle, he issued a decree that no one could ever kill a blackbird on his lands under penalty of death, and we Crawfords still honor it to this day. That's why there are a thousand of the pests nesting in the walls." Inghram lowers his voice to a whisper.
>
> "You see, tradition has it that if six certain ravens who dwell within the castle walls are killed, the Crawfords will fall from power. Only problem is that no one knows which six are the special ones, so killing any of them is forbidden. Silly, superstitious rubbish."

After a few moments of eating and suppertime chit-chat, read the following:

> Suddenly, in mid-mouthful, you hear a woman's scream from a nearby room. At once, Sir Crawford and Griswell leap to their feet. They throw back a set of doors in the hall into what appears to be the castle chapel. There, you are witness to a horrible sight: a startled servant-woman, standing over the body of a man. The man is lies face down, and his back is lacerated with several dagger wounds.
>
> Kneeling, Sir Crawford turns the body over. "It's Corbett!" he exclaims to Griswell, "The master-at-arms!"

Corbett, leader of the castle guard and a wereraven, was slain by Mr. Gaunt. Just before dinner, Mr. Gaunt slipped from Bran's chambers through a secret passage, lured Corbett into the room under some pretense, attacked him, and then quickly returned to his room via the passage. Corbett, knowing nothing of Mr. Gaunt's missing *amulet,* provided little helpful information when interrogated, thereby frustrating his assailant into murder.

PCs eager to establish a connection between the murder and the prophetic couplet in the great hall may be interested to learn that Corbett's grandmother was cousin to Inghram's great-grandfather, thereby distantly relating Corbett to the Crawford family. This fact is common knowledge among the household, but it has no bearing on the case.

After quickly conferring with Griswell, Inghram orders the body taken away to be prepared for burial. As the body is warm, Inghram realizes that the strangers cannot be responsible—it probably happened while they were still outside in the rain. Yet he isn't going to take any chances:

> Inghram turns to you. "My friends, you have discovered us on a dark night. I do not know who is to blame for this, but we will find him soon enough. Until then, I must forbid anyone from leaving Crawford Manor. All comfort will be made available to you, and I advise you to keep to your chambers lest the murderer strike again."
>
> Suddenly, you become aware of an awful, cacophonous sound overhead. It seems to crackle from the walls themselves. Then you realize what it is: above the thunder, it is the sound of a hundred ravens screaming a dirge.

After this, Inghram and Griswell retire to Griswell's chambers to discuss a course of action. All other NPCs—including Breanda, the servant who discovered Corbett—return to their rooms for the night, resuming their normal schedules in the morning. No effort is made to confine the PCs to their chambers; for the most part, the circumstances cause the manor household to ignore their guests. However, no one is allowed to travel beyond the castle walls.

The Wereravens

The mission of the wereravens is to protect the members of the Crawford family. However, as lycanthropy is generally feared, the wereravens find it best to

maintain the secrecy of their true natures; they masquerade as members of the castle household, and no one thinks of them as otherwise. Only in absolute privacy or under the most distressing of circumstances (i.e., near death) do the wereravens reveal their lycanthropic forms in front of a non-wereraven.

Meanwhile, for all appearances, the castle is defended by five human guards—three women and two men—each of whom is the spouse of one of the wereravens. While each realizes that there is something odd about his or her spouse, no one but the wereravens themselves knows the truth.

Two guards patrol the curtain wall at any given time. After the murder, two guards are posted inside the keep as well (see map).

Guards (5): AL LG; AC 6; MV 12; F2; hp 15 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; studded leather armor, broad sword, shield, dirk.

Lastly, each wereraven-human couple has one child. All six children are true wereravens; however, unlike most wereravens, the magical bond that ties the ravenkind to the manor prevents the children from assuming their heritage until his or her wereraven-parent is deceased—wereravens, like all lycanthropes, are long-lived but not immortal. For all intents and purposes, these children are 0-level humans. When the parent dies, the child blooms into a wereraven on the next full moon, at which time he or she is initiated into the manor's secrets by the other wereravens.

After the murder, Corbett's daughter Ceirin (3 hp) begins assuming her father's responsibilities as master-at-arms and is armed in the same manner as the guards. She blossoms into a full wereraven in four-days' time (the full moon). Due to the emergency, the groundskeeper's son Ramses (2 hp) is also acting as a castle guard and is likewise accoutered. Both Ceirin and Ramses are 20 years old.

Any PC who attacks, murders, or brings about the death of a wereraven, its spouse, or its child is set upon by the remaining wereravens; they fight to the death. Mr. Gaunt has temporarily escaped this punishment only because his identity as the murderer is unknown.

Crawford Manor

Crawford Manor is a strange sight, with its steep, black roof, multiple chimneys, and the original White Tower sticking up through the middle of it all. A cloud of ravens perpetually circles overhead.

The curtain walls of the castle are 15' high and 5' thick; the exterior walls of the keep are also 5' thick. The seven towers along the curtain wall are 30' high. Within the keep, the ceiling on the first floor is 20' high, while the ceiling on the second floor is 10' high. The third-floor ceiling (the keep's roof) is slanted, ranging from 8' high at the exterior walls to a maximum of 20' high at the level's center. Unless otherwise stated, all doors within the manor-house are assumed to be unlocked.

The artistry and workmanship of Crawford Manor is exquisite, the result of the magnificent talent of the six dwarven masons who constructed it. The exterior of the building features lavishly cut eaves and downspouts, buttresses carved into atlantes and caryatids, and a near-seamless joining of stone throughout; sculpted friezes and tapestry-like panel engravings decorate every room in the interior, each depicting a different tale from the life of Sir Bertram Crawford.

A. Storehouse. Filled with bags of grain, coils of rope, ale-barrels, crates, etc., as well as a wagon for transporting goods.

B. Prison Cells. Located on the ground level of the northeastern tower, the prison is clean and functional, even though is hasn't been used in a century. There are three 10' × 10' iron-barred cells.

C. Servant's Apartments. These six two-storey apartments are where the wereravens and their families live.

D. Blacksmith and Stable. This is where Merle the Smith, one of the six wereravens, is most often found. Merle is a gigantic but quiet man who finds fulfillment through his work. He cares for the manor's horses and mules in addition to his responsibilities as blacksmith. He can mend weapons and armor, as well as make nails, horseshoes, and other items. Merle can also construct weapons as per the weaponsmithing proficiency.

Merle is aided in his duties by his teenage-son, Rugby (4 hp).

If asked about his argument with Corbett (see area **14**), Merle relates the following:

> "Aye, Corbett and I argued recently. He was displeased with a sword I had made for him. But murder! If you suspect me, look elsewhere. I would not have killed him even if we had argued every day of our lives. The one who did this will suffer my wrath should ever I catch him!"

Two nights ago, Merle saw something that has lead him to suspect that the murder may have been the work of enemies of Sir Crawford's, such as humanoids, bandits, or the like. If asked his opinion on the murder, Merle reluctantly reveals that, as fantastic as it sounds, he briefly saw "an orangutan" capering on the manor's roof, having seen a picture of one in a book in the library. Embarrassed but simultaneously adamant about what he saw (which was actually the bar-lgura in area **13**), Merle has nothing more to add and suggests that the lord himself would know more about his adversaries than he does.

Merle the Smith (true wereraven): INT genius; AL NG; AC 6; MV 12 in human form, 1, fly 27 (C) in hybrid or raven form; HD 4+2; hp 33; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12 or by weapon type; SA 10% chance of eye peck per successful attack, 2% per hp damage inflicted that victim contracts lycanthropy; SD hit only by silver or +2 magical weapons; S 18/51 (+2/+3); SZ M; ML 14; XP 420; *MM*/238. Proficiencies: blacksmithing, weaponsmithing.

E. Armory. The racks, kept well-stocked by Merle the Smith, are full of spears, swords, long bows, crossbows, and numerous quivers of arrows.

Level One

1. Entrance Hall. A large fireplace dominates the western end of the hall, above which hangs an enormous white banner emblazoned with the Crawford crest: a stylized representation of a black raven flying into the sun. A wide stairway just left of the main entrance leads to the second floor.

2. Rook's Office. A cozy room, featuring deep, comfortable chairs set before a fireplace in the southwest-

corner. Bookshelves line the north and east walls, while high windows and tapestries line the west and south walls. A huge oak desk takes up the southeast corner; here is where Rook, the castle's steward, spends most of his time.

As the major-domo, Rook's responsibilities are mainly administrative; he is in charge of paying salaries, procuring food and other goods for the castle, etc. He is usually very busy, sparing little time to chat with the PCs; if a conversation begins to drag on, he politely asks them to leave. However, if asked about the dwarves who built the Crawford Manor, Rook relates the following:

> "Yes, the craftsmanship of Crawford Manor is spectacular. The history books say that the dwarves who built it died and were buried here, but there's no sign of them today. Perhaps their grave markers were destroyed or covered up in times since. My father once told me that they were entombed in an underground vault, but in all my years, I've never heard of any underground chamber or passage in the vicinity."

This last statement is true; as it passed from wereraven to descendant, the story of the dwarves has faded to the point that none of the household knows of the Undertower or the secret door in area **7** leading to it. If pressed on the subject, however, Rook recommends the library next door as being a good place to research the matter.

Rook (true wereraven): INT genius; AL NG; AC 6; MV 12 in human form, 1, fly 27 (C) in hybrid or raven form; HD 4+2; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12 or by weapon type; SA 10% chance of eye peck per successful attack, 2% per hp damage inflicted that victim contracts lycanthropy; SD hit only by silver or +2 magical weapons; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420; *MM*/238.

In a large drawer of his desk, Rook keeps a locked chest. The lock is armed with a nausea-gas trap; if set off, all PCs within 10' must save vs. poison or be violently ill for 2d6 rounds. Inside are 10 pp, 106 gp, and 280 sp, as well as a gemstone worth 100 gp, a *potion of delusion*, and a *potion of diminution*.

Rook's office is locked at night.

3. Library. Bookshelves line all four walls from floor to ceiling; a ladder stands in the southeast corner which can be used to reach the highest shelves. Chairs and two small tables, equipped with multiple candelabras, complete the room.

Studious PCs who spend some time in this room (1d10 hours if they're just browsing) discover the spell *comprehend languages* inscribed in a book about dwarven linguistics. A labeled book on exotic wildlife features many ink drawings, including a few of the "hairy man of the woods"—commonly known as the orangutan. Sharp-eyed PCs may also notice a gap between books on a particular shelf; the absent tome, which is currently hidden in area **13,** is the library's sole volume on the history of Crawford Manor.

4. Great Hall. This is the hall in which the PCs dined. It features a large fireplace on the western wall, with the portrait of Sir Bertram Crawford above it. Narrow windows along the west and north walls allow in a modicum of daylight. A large oak table takes up the center of the hall, and tapestries and banners cover the walls. A resplendent frieze running along all four walls—perhaps the finest in the whole manor—tells the saga of the orc-dwarf war and the prominent role that Bertram Crawford played in it.

By pressing a niche in the west wall in the southwest corner of the room, a panel moves aside revealing a narrow space. Inside the space, a long ladder disappears into the darkness above; this is a vertical passage connecting the great hall with areas **9** and **13.** A peephole in the panel allows one to stand at the base of the ladder and hear and see the goings-on of the great hall.

5. Kitchen. A large fireplace—the center of activity in a kitchen—takes up the east wall. The rest of the room is clogged full of tables, stools, laundry tubs, hanging crockery, and strings of cheeses, sausages, and garlic. There is one pantry each for wet and dry stores. A trapdoor in the kitchen floor leads to a small root cellar, so narrow that only a single person can squeeze into it.

The kitchen is the sovereign domain of Breanda the cook, a cherubic-faced woman who bustles about the room attending to ten things at once.

The kitchen also serves as a classroom for some of the castle children, including Faye's daughter, Fayette (2 hp), Rook's daughter Kerry (2 hp), and Breanda's very young son Kern (1 hp). The children help Breanda with chores when not learning their lessons.

If asked about the manor ravens, Breanda slyly informs the PCs that it is rumored that the Crawford family members are able to transform into giant ravens, and that they often fly about the land doing good deeds. These statements have no basis in truth; the rumor is a red herring. DMs are encouraged to embellish and add to the story as he or she sees fit.

Breanda (true wereraven): INT genius; AL NG; AC 6; MV 12 in human form, 1, fly 27 (C) in hybrid or raven form; HD 4+2; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12 or by weapon type; SA 10% chance of eye peck per successful attack, 2% per hp damage inflicted that victim contracts lycanthropy; SD hit only by silver or +2 magical weapons; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420; *MM*/238.

6. Garden. Flower beds and a small vegetable patch surround the castle well, situated in the center of this courtyard; the eastern and southern walls, 10' high, are topped with a stone coping. The garden is the responsibility of Waldron, the groundskeeper, and he is most often found here. A widower, Waldron is a gnarled old man, stooped and a bit hard of hearing, but quick-witted and friendly. As the eldest of the wereravens, he is their leader.

Waldron is greatly disturbed by the murder of his ravenkind brother. Nevertheless, he perceives the PCs as being good tools for ferreting out the killer, so he relates what information he possesses. He knows that the castle was built by dwarves but adds that Rook knows more of its history than he. Waldron also tells the PCs that the ghost of Sir Bertram Crawford haunts the manor, often taking the form of a giant raven; Waldron doesn't actually believe this, but uses it to shunt away any scrutiny aimed at himself and the other wereravens.

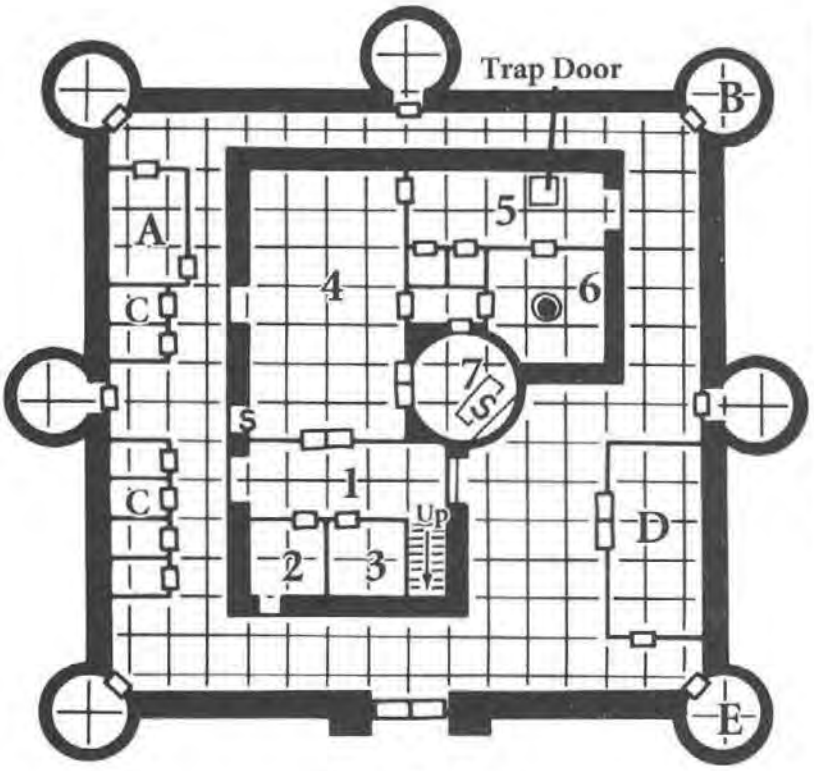
Waldron (true wereraven): INT genius; AL NG; AC 6; MV 12 in human form, 1, fly 27 (C) in hybrid or raven form; HD 4+2; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12 or by weapon type; SA 10% chance of eye peck per successful attack, 2% per hp damage inflicted that victim contracts lycanthropy; SD hit only by silver or +2 magical weapons; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420; *MM*/238.

After infiltrating the castle, Mr. Gaunt ambushed Bran and used his own

Crawford Manor

Legend

- 10 feet
- Door
- Double Door
- Secret Door
- Fireplace
- Stairs Up (Up)
- Stairs Down (Dwn)
- G — Castle Guard



Level One

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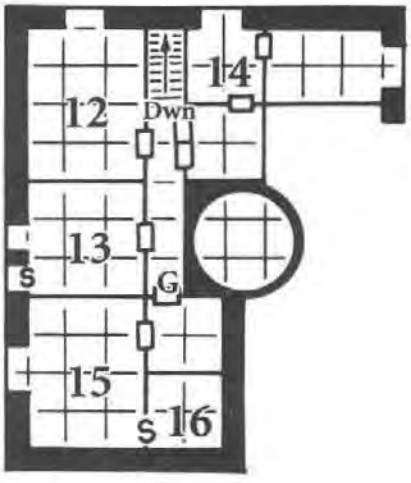

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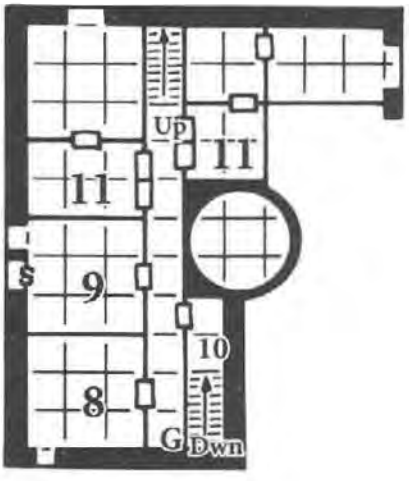


Level Two

version of the *polymorph other spell* to *polymorph* Bran into a jack-o'-lantern. Mr Gaunt then switched the new jack-o'-lantern with the one atop the dummy scarecrow standing immobile near the east wall. The scarecrow is for all appearances normal, although Waldron's supernatural instincts have given him a vague and uneasy feeling about the construct. Suspicious PCs may notice that the jack-o'-lantern bears an expression of such abject terror that they may question what hand could carve such a thing; spells such as *detect good* or *know alignment* reveals faint emanations of good.

If *dispel magic* is cast upon the jack-o'-lantern, Bran is returned to his true form. The hysterical boy is only able to sputter, "Mr. Gaunt! He's mad! He'll kill us all!" Bran needs at least 12 hours of sleep before regaining coherency, but he remembers nothing of his assault by the wizard or his consequent transformation.

Bran: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 7, D 14, C 10, I 13, W 6, Ch 8; ML 7.

7. White Tower. This is the original tower, created in a bygone day, around which the rest of Crawford Manor was constructed. It has since been converted into the castle chapel (dedicated to any lawful good deity of the DM's campaign). An altar has been installed along the southeast surface of the circular chamber, and several pews face the altar. Before the altar rests a large casket (10' long, 5' wide) made from a single block of marble; the top features a bas-relief of a bald, curly-bearded man in armor with his hands crossed over the hilt of his sword, while the sides of the casket are decorated with scenes of interest from the life of Sir Bertram Crawford. Although tradition holds that this is the tomb of Bertram, it is not so: a small secret door on the side of the casket, activated by pressing part of the bas-relief, slides aside to reveal a steep and narrow staircase leading down to area **17.** No one living in the manor knows about this secret staircase.

Along the southwest surface of the White Tower, a staircase clings to the wall before stopping in mid-air at a height of 12'. This is all that remains of the original staircase; PCs must scale, climb, or use magic to reach the top. The White Tower rises to a dizzying height of 80', and an incredibly heavy lead trapdoor, unused for centuries (Open Doors check required), leads onto the roof. The rooftop of the White Tower is where about half of the castle's avian population rooks (the other half roosts in the curtain walls), and thus is carpeted with nests, collected bric-a-brac, and cawing ravens. It is also where Mr. Gaunt's *amulet +4* is hidden, squeezed into a crack in the top of the trapdoor. As the thick lead blocks both *detect magic* and *locate object* spells, PCs are unable to identify the *amulet* amid the chaos unless they specifically examine the trapdoor.

The birds, who are attracted to Crawford Manor by the presence of the wereravens, are under their control and do not attack unless threatened or ordered to attack by their masters. However, they dive-bomb, caw at, and peck the boots of PCs who disturb their treasure.

Ravens (100): INT low; AL N; AC 7; MV 1, fly 36 (B); HD 1–2 hp each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA 10% chance of eye peck per successful attack; SZ T; ML 10; XP 15 each; *MM*/27.

The White Tower derives its name from the color of its exterior, which has been stained by generations of raven-droppings.

Level Two

8–9. Guest Quarters. These are the rooms in which the PCs stay. Each room features four beds and a fireplace, as well as throw rugs and comfortable chairs. A secret door in the southwest corner of room **9** (activated by a stone set in the fireplace) opens to the vertical passage connecting areas **4** and **13.**

10. Linen Closet. This walk-in closet is filled with clean linens, as well as spare candles, lanterns, and torches.

11. Guest Suites. Used for visitors of high rank. Each suite features a fireplace, as well as tables, chairs, a desk, tapestries, and other typical furniture. Both suites are currently empty of guests; however, PCs may catch a glimpse through an open door of Faye the chamberwoman dusting in one of the suites.

Faye is an energetic and efficient chamberwoman, though her manner is somewhat brusque. If asked about the manor's ravens, she has the following to say:

> "Ach! Don't talk to me about those ravens! Those dirty birds, always flying about. Thankfully, none ever come into the keep—except for Griswell's pet, Hugo. He's the only raven allowed inside the manor itself.
>
> "But, truth be told, I'm worried for them. The other day I saw a stray black cat slinking about, and while I haven't seen it since, I just hope it hasn't been eating the birds. Whether the prophecy's true or not, I'd rather not take any chances."

Faye isn't worried about the prophecy at all; rather, she's concerned because, as a wereraven, she feels responsible for her mundane brothers and sisters. The black cat she saw was actually Mr. Gaunt sneaking into the castle.

Faye (true wereraven): INT genius; AL NG; AC 6; MV 12 in human form, 1, Fl 27 (C) in hybrid or raven form; HD 4+2; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12 or by weapon type; SA 10% chance of eye peck per successful attack, 2% per hp damage inflicted that victim contracts lycanthropy; SD hit only by silver or +2 magical weapons; SZ M; ML 14; XP 420; *MM*/238.

Level Three

12. Alida's Bedroom. The door to this room is kept locked by Alida. She is eager for "adventure" and would like to find the murderer. Unfortunately, the guard posted at the end of the corridor has opposing orders from her father: she isn't allowed to leave her room. If the PCs knock on her door, she stands in the doorway and speaks with them.

If asked about the manor ravens, Alida relates the following:

> "There's so much hocus-pocus attached to the ravens that it's hard not to be a little skeptical of the prophecy. Still, there is something weird about them, like how they never attack or peck at anybody. Something else, too: a strange event that once happened to me.
>
> "One day, when I was little, I went boating by myself on a river in the wood near the castle. It had been a rainy spring and the currents were rough. Before I knew it, my tiny boat had been overturned, and I was swept into the middle of the river. I called for help, but no one was around. I kept going under—I must have swallowed half of the stream. Then all of a

sudden, I was plucked from the river, and in a flash, I was on the bank. I looked up, and in the sky above me was the largest raven I'd ever seen! It could've easily picked up and flown off with two grown men, let alone me! But it quickly disappeared among the treetops. I stumbled home like a bedraggled rat, where I received a hot bath from Breanda and a deserved scolding from my father."

The giant raven to whom Alida refers was none other than Corbett in hybrid-form, fulfilling his responsibility to the Crawford family.

For Alida's statistics, refer to "A Midnight Dreary" above.

13. Bran's Bedroom. A secret door in the western wall of the room (opened by pressing a flagstone) allows access to the vertical passage connecting this room with areas **4** and **9.** The door to this room is locked (Mr. Gaunt has the key) and the guard at the end of the corridor, left undistracted, stops any attempts to pick the lock. The secret passage is the best available exit.

Typical bedroom furniture (bed, chest, wardrobe, etc.) fills the chamber, but the most startling feature is a collection of dead ravens under the bed; examination reveals that all of their necks have been broken. This finding may lend credence to any literal interpretations of the great hall's prophecy.

The dead birds are the work of the bar-lgura tanar'ri "haunting" this room. This particular bar-lgura (a minor type of fiend from the Lower Planes that resembles an orangutan) was exiled and banished to the Prime Material Plane in punishment for crimes of wickedness outré even among the hateful bar-lgura—it was fond of torturing and dismembering individuals of its own kind. Lonely, it wandered aimlessly until encountering Mr. Gaunt who, with his high Charisma, quickly subdued the dim-witted brute and made it his slave. Upon Mr. Gaunt's insinuation into the castle, the bar-lgura followed him via *teleportation* and then was ordered by its master to search the manor for the missing *amulet* under cover of darkness while the scarecrow set about his business of murder. The bar-lurga was ordered not to hurt any of the human occupants, as at the time, Mr. Gaunt's anger was directed only at the ravens. Unfortunately, the fiend immediately

forgot its mission as soon as it left Mr. Gaunt's presence and has so far occupied its nights by stalking isolated ravens and wringing their necks.

Currently, the bar-lgura is under orders to stay in this area. However, the chaotic beast has grown bored in its solitude and will take delight in toying with anyone who enters. At the first sign of entry, the bar-lgura makes itself *invisible* and takes position on top of the wardrobe, where it uses its *spectral force* and *telekinesis* abilities to create illusionary monsters and ghosts while hurling furniture at the party. If the chance becomes available, it attempts to slap nearby PCs and infect them with its *fear* power. Should its *invisibility* be revealed, the bar-lgura abandons its game and assails the PCs outright, fleeing through a window should it become gravely injured, where it menaces the party with threats like, "The boy! You'll never get to the boy in time! I'm going to the garden where I'll snap his neck like he was one of those dumb birds!" Eventually, forgetting its taunts, it swings away over the roof in search of a place where, using its *change self* ability to appear as a scullery lad, it can rest undisturbed and heal its wounds; areas **A, B, 3,** and **11** are good hiding places.

Bar-lgura: INT low; AL CE; AC 0; MV 9, climb 15; HD 6+6; hp 41; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1–6/1–6/2–12; SA spring attack; SD camouflage (95% chance to hide in shadows), spells; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 8,000; *Planescape® Monstrous Compendium® Appendix*/97 (tanar'ri, lesser). Spell-like abilities: *change self* (twice/day), *darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility, dispel magic, entangle, fear* (by touch), *infravision, invisibility* (twice/day), *plant growth, spectral force* (twice/day), *telekinesis, teleport without error.*

As an exile, the tanar'ri has lost its ability to *gate* in other bar-lgura.

If a PC throws back the lid of Bran's unlocked cedar chest, he discovers a large book entitled *A History of Crawford Manor,* removed from the library and secreted here by Mr. Gaunt. By skimming the handwritten text (one hour minimum), the PCs discover a cryptic reference to a secret underground burial chamber, which can be

accessed only via a hidden passage within the White Tower. However, the book provides no clue as to the exact location of the entrance.

14. Griswell's Chambers. This area is separated into an entrance room, a laboratory, and a bedroom; the latter two areas are equipped with fireplaces. Griswell's spellbook, lying on the desk in his laboratory, is guarded by a *sepia snake sigil.* It contains all of the spells that he has memorized.

In quieter times, Griswell practices amateur astronomy. As his bedroom affords a southern view over the garden, he keeps the tools of his hobby there rather than in his lab. A brass telescope (2,500 gp) rests near the window, and every available wall and scrap of table space is covered with star-charts, weather maps, and dog-eared astronomy texts. Recently, Griswell has become convinced that he has discovered a new star. Hoping to snatch a little bit of immortality by being the first to identify it (and thereby have it named after him), Griswell has become a bit paranoid about his research. Although he won't resort to violence, he refuses to allow anyone to enter the bedroom and dodges any questions about its contents.

Inghram and Griswell are in the laboratory discussing possible suspects and motives of the murder. They have ruled out old enemies and bandits, and they are currently discussing whether Merle the Smith might have slain Corbett in anger—Griswell overheard the two arguing only yesterday. However, Inghram believes (rightly so) that Merle is too honest and good-natured to commit such an act. The two suspend their disagreement to speak to the PCs or answer questions, but both individuals are uncomfortable with discussing the murder with strangers and should be roleplayed accordingly.

For Inghram's and Griswell's statistics, refer to "A Midnight Dreary" above.

Perched on a stand in a corner of the laboratory is Griswell's familiar, Hugo. A huge raven, Hugo is quite intelligent and capable of speech—but he speaks only in rhyme. While he answers questions put to him (he sees and knows a lot of what goes on in the castle), he is never very clear. If someone says the words "amulet," "Mr. Gaunt," or "orang-utan" in his presence, Hugo bursts out:

> "Crawford crow in the woods looking down, seeing, spying.
> Steals shiny stick-man pretty and flaps to manor flying.
> So searching scarecrow-man has come with scythe a-reaping,
> For his stolen mojo hidden deeper-deepest dark safekeeping! Caw!"

Hugo (huge raven): INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 1, fly 27 (C); HD 1–1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–2; SA 10% chance of eye peck per successful attack; SZ S; ML 12; XP 35; *MM*/27.

Inghram reacts to this information as being the nonsensical noise of an animal mimicking human speech; Griswell, on the other hand, knows his familiar and realizes the importance of the song even though its meaning mystifies him—thereby leaving any deciphering to the PCs.

15. Inghram's Chambers. A guard is posted at the door. If the PCs are able to get past the guard, they find Inghram's chambers to be splendidly decorated, featuring an enormous canopy bed, exotic rugs and tapestries, and, near the fireplace, a massive desk where Inghram works.

16. Treasury. The contents of this windowless room are 7,621 gp (loose in an iron chest), 5,444 sp (loose in a wooden chest), 15 rubies in a silk pouch worth 500–1,000 gp each, an *arrow of golem slaying,* a bag of beans, a *cloak of elvenkind,* a *hammer +2,* a *ring of warmth,* a *spear +1, +3 vs. reptiles,* and a *wand of enemy detection.*

If the PCs ransack the treasury, an alarm is raised and they are immediately attacked and thrown into the prison (area **B**).

Undertower

17. Staircase. The stairs from the false tomb in the White Tower are narrow and steep, more like a ladder than a staircase. Upon reaching the foot of the stairs (70' beneath the ground above), PCs can see that they have entered a cavernous chamber crowded with stalagmites and stalactites. The only exit is a tunnel leading to the east.

18. Flooded Passage. The uneven floors of the corridors leading from areas **17** and **19** slope downward, the air growing damper with descent. At the bottom of the slopes (20 vertical feet from area **17** and the ledges of area **19**), an underground pool, fed by water dripping from the ceiling and running down the walls in rivulets, softly laps at the cold stone of the passage floor. The water is moved by dark, swirling currents. The slope of the passage continues under the water's depths, leveling off at a point 12' below the surface.

The only way to continue without swimming is to cross a narrow (2' wide) stone bridge spanning the center of the tunnel just above the water. It is supported by submerged arches; however, the central section of the bridge (10' from either bank) hinges upon a pivot in such a way that it rotates if weight greater than 20 lbs. is placed upon it, dumping everything on it into the cold water before resetting itself. If the east end of this rotating section of the bridge is closely examined, PCs see a hole in the pivoting mechanism; this originally accommodated a locking pin which held the bridge in place for safe travel. The pin is nowhere to be found, but a torch, spike, or similar device works just as well.

Nothing lives in the freezing, black water, but DMs are advised not to reveal that the swirling is caused by the water draining into area **22** rather than by any imagined aquatic monstrosities.

19. Well Chamber. This circular chamber is 40' in diameter. The ceiling, which is a scant 10' above the narrow ledges leading to areas **18** and **20,** is encrusted with massive calcite stalactites. Sixty feet from the ledges, the surface of a dark underground lake waits to embrace anyone foolish enough to plunge into its depths.

The walls of the well allow for easy scaling, and are considered rough and dry for climbing checks (see chapter 14 in the *PHB*); a check is required whenever a PC moves between areas **18, 20,** and **22.** The 4'-high passage leading to area **22** isn't visible from the ledges, although it is in plain view to those in or close to the water. A thin stream runs out of the passage and into the well.

The lake (12' deep) is infested with crawling claws, tossed there by a dwarven cleric when this complex was constructed. They swarm upon anything that enters the water at the rate of five claws per round, following PCs should they attempt to escape.

Crawling Claws (20): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD 2 hp each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4 (armored foes), 1–6 (unarmored foes); SD half-damage from edged weapons, immune to *charm, control undead, hold, sleep, raise dead, death magic, turning,* holy water, and damage bonuses from magical weapons; SZ T; ML 20; XP 35 each; *MM*/48.

20. Gauntlet. Standing at the entrance to this round tunnel, PCs hear a low moaning echoing from beyond. As Mr. Gaunt, in his passage through the Undertower, avoided both this area and area **21,** there is no sign of anyone having ever traversed them before.

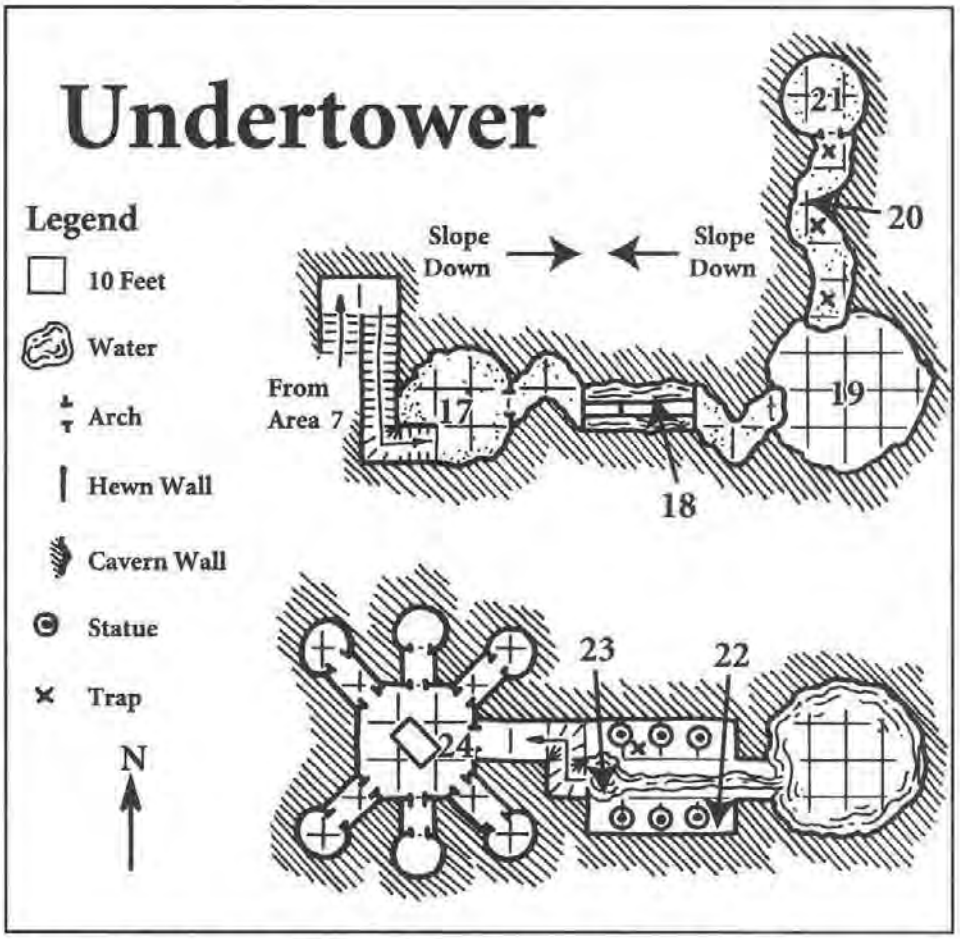
Camouflaged beneath a light covering of sand 5' north of the ledge are three jaw-traps (THAC0 18). A PC who is caught receives 2–8 hp damage and becomes trapped; a successful Bend Bars roll is required to free a victim, and the PC receives an additional 1 hp damage per round until freed. Ten feet beyond these, a collapsing floor opens upon a 10' deep pit (1–6 hp falling damage). Activating it causes a trapdoor in the ceiling to simultaneously open, dropping rocks and sand upon anything in the pit for an additional 1–10 hp damage. Finally, a flagstone just south of the entrance to area **21,** when depressed, causes a huge ball-pendulum to swing down from the ceiling. The PC activating this trap must save vs. death magic or be brained. A PC wearing a helmet may add 1 to his roll.

All of the traps can be disarmed (or at least activated from a point of safety), but only the jaw-traps can be reset.

21. Crypt of the Ancients. A thin veil of cobwebs covers the entrance to this tiny, round room. A small (6" diameter) hole in the domed ceiling leads to the surface, where the wind blows across it. The result is a persistent, low moaning that echoes into the crypt.

There is barely enough space to stand in the room. Twelve sarcophagi stand on end along the circumference of the wall. Each is chiselled from plain gray stone and stands 5' high. Opening a sarcophagus causes the mummified skeleton inside to spill out toward the characters; the PCs should have a good scare the first time this happens, so DMs may wish to describe the skeleton as "leaping out" at them.

These stunted skeletons—less than 5' tall—are the remains of a forgotten race of humans who built the original White Tower. (DMs may choose to substitute examples of an ancient or lost civilization from their campaign-worlds.) While their bronze short swords and spears are of interest only to sages, each sarcophagus contains 50 gp worth of golden rings, torcs, and armbands.



22. Memorial Chamber. The tiny passage from area **19** abruptly opens into a 20' high chamber. The walls and floor have been hewn smooth. The room is dominated by six 12' statues which line the north and south walls; each is mounted on a pedestal and depicts a grim dwarf dressed in a kilt, a mail shirt, and a conical helm holding a hammer and a chisel across its chest. Dwarven runes providing biographical information of the subject cover each pedestal.

A pressure plate near the northern-central statue causes the spring-loaded hammer of that statue to lash out in a semicircle at head level (THAC0 15). It causes 2–12 hp damage and is counterbalanced to reset once the pressure on the plate is removed.

An ice-cold waterfall emerges from a crack in the ceiling near the west wall of the cavern, creating a small pool at its foot. A stream leads east from this pool through the chamber and the tunnel beyond, feeding into the lake at the bottom of area **21.**

23. Waterfall. By standing in the knee-deep pool at the waterfall's base, PCs may pass under the curtain of cold water into a small chamber. Getting wet is unavoidable, and the water extinguishes any uncovered flame. The pool continues for a few feet, ending in a curved flight of stairs leading up to the west. Beyond, a 20' corridor ends in an ornately carved arch covered in runes; dwarven PCs or characters familiar with the dwarven language recognize the runes as being of a high-dwarven tongue. The runes praise the dwarven gods and warn evil-doers from passing any further.

24. Tomb.

> A large marble table occupies the center of this round room, with six small archways spaced equidistant around the room; the archways are odd in that they are only five feet high, yet nothing but darkness can be seen beyond. Upon the table lies a human skeleton adorned in plate mail. A shield, depicting a black raven on a white field, lies atop the skeleton's breast, and the bony hands still clutch an enormous broad sword that lies beneath the shield. The skull is bare save the curls of what was once a bushy black beard attached to its jaw.
>
> The entire tomb is free of dust.

This chamber is the final resting place of Sir Bertram Crawford. His sword is a *broad sword +2, giant slayer*, and his armor is *plate mail +2*. A *ring of spell turning* glints on his left hand.

As the PCs enter, a low mist develops about their ankles. The mist reaches knee-level in two rounds.

Read the following to the players:

> As if seeping through the pores of some strange stone flesh upon which you stand, the mist rises and wraps itself around your legs. You feel heavy-laden and rooted to the spot. Suddenly, like eyes adjusting to darkness, you become aware of an immobile figure standing in each of the six small archways around you. The eyeless pits of six skulls glare at you, while six white beards grind in rage on ivory jawbones. The figures are dressed in chainmail and tattered kilts, yet their coverings possess a peculiar wispiness that allows you to see through them.
>
> In a deep bass which rolls off the walls around you, one of the ghostly dwarves speaks:
>
> "Begone intruders! Why do ye invade our sleep again?"

Undead dwarves (6): INT average; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+12; hp 36, 31, 30, 28 (×2), 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA *phase door* at will; SD +2 weapon to hit, immune to mind-affecting spells; MR 25%; SZ M; ML special; XP 1,400 each; *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual, Volume One.*

These are the six dwarves who built Crawford Manor. In their undead state, they now guard the tomb of Bertram Crawford. They attack (with their fists) only if attacked first or if the tomb or grave-goods are disturbed. They can never be permanently destroyed; if reduced to 0 hit points, an undead dwarf reappears 1–4 rounds later with full hit points. Any dwarven characters in the party feel a great reverence toward these beings. Good-aligned dwarven PCs may be moved toward violent action against persons who even suggest the idea of attacking the dwarves or looting the tomb.

The dwarves are rather uncommunicative and answer most of the queries put to them with stony silence. However, the leader (36 hp) answers some questions. While his initial warning was spoken in an archaic form of common, he speaks only in dwarvish for the rest of the encounter.

If asked about the "again" in the ghost-dwarf's last statement, the DM may read the following:

> After a long, cold silence, the stentorian voice answers, "Another disturbed us not long ago, but I see that he is not among you."

The dwarf is referring to Mr. Gaunt, but he says nothing more on this subject.

If the PCs praise the workmanship of the castle above or ask about its origins, the leader speaks:

> "Aye. 'Twas our greatest achievement, and through it, the debt owed Bertram Crawford by Clan MacDuncan was settled. Mighty was Clan MacDuncan's need during the dark days of war against the orcs and giants of the under-mountains, and mightier still was the strength of Crawford's arm and the bite of his blade as he carved a crimson path to victory. He inspired dwarves as no human had before nor ever shall again. Constructing this modest demesne was the least the MacDuncans could do in return, and it was here that we, the artificers, spent our remaining days.
>
> "Great power is bound within this castle's walls, the least of which is that which can be seen."

If asked about the prophecy of the ravens, the dwarf spirit replies:

> "Ah, thou speakest of the raven-people, those who may take form of human, corvus, and in-between. Long ago, in his adventuring days, the man ye see laid here rescued one of their kind from the stake. He healed the raven-man and returned him to his people in the forest. The raven-people were greatly thankful and told him that they would grant him anything they could provide. Yet while Crawford's back was strong and his belly was full, he knew there may come a time in the future when these things were not so. Therefore, he told them he would return one day and ask of them a boon.
>
> "It was not until we built the manor, many years later, that Crawford returned to them, and they had not forgotten him. Men are not long-lived as some other peoples of this world, so his youth far behind, Crawford realized that he could not defend himself and his family forever. But he knew who could. He told the ravenkind what he needed: he wanted them, with the power of beating wing and savage talon, to protect his castle and family forever. To this they agreed. They chose six of their strongest and bound them to Crawford Manor. They would never abandon their posts; if one died, its child would rise to take its place.
>
> "So did Crawford issue his only law: lest one of the raven-people be slain, no one must ever harm a raven, crow, or blackbird on his lands, under penalty of death.
>
> "Thus do the six raven-people watch over the castle above to this day, as we watch over it below."

The dwarves have nothing else to say. They remain standing in the archways until attacked or the PCs leave. Looking back as they exit, the characters see the dwarf spirits fade slowly away, and the mist dissipates soon thereafter. Returning to the tomb causes the dwarves to reappear.

Thing of Evil

Since the murder, Mr. Gaunt has not been idle. In his disguise as Bran Crawford, he may be seen on the grounds going to and from the storehouse to get the supplies for his traps (see sidebar). If approached gently, the faux-Bran is suspicious yet polite; if questioned about the traps, he at first refuses to admit that they are his doing, only to suddenly switch tack and confess that he has laid them in the hope of killing the murderer. If confronted with the idea that the traps could just as easily hurt another household member, he

answers using a 13-year-old's logic that such a thing couldn't happen. If asked about the "haunting" in his bedroom, he feigns ignorance. Should accusations become too scathing, he simply flees.

In this way, Mr. Gaunt hopes to camouflage his major crimes by openly committing minor ones. Meanwhile, barring any interference, Mr. Gaunt follows a carefully orchestrated plan to attack the wereravens. The first evening after the murder of Corbett, Mr. Gaunt (still *polymorphed* as Bran) and his bar-lgura slave attempt to capture Waldron as he finishes his day's work in the garden, dragging him to a secluded area such as the White Tower to be interrogated and killed. Early the following morning, Mr. Gaunt assaults Breanda in the kitchen as she begins her chores, pushing her down into the root cellar where he can easily attack her from above. The next day, he attacks Rook and Faye—each of whom works in relative isolation—as they go about their duties. Finally, that night, Mr. Gaunt gambles all by setting fire to the storehouse and stables, killing Merle in the resulting confusion. Afterward, Mr. Gaunt decides that his *amulet* is truly lost and escapes.

Once Mr. Gaunt realizes that the PCs are on to him (most likely by freeing the real Bran), he abandons the Bran ruse, instead using his *polymorph* spells to evade capture by becoming a cat or other small animal while between murders. At this point, the only way to catch Mr. Gaunt is in the act. Having discovered the true identities of the wereravens, the PCs may discover that the best defense is to set a guard with each wereraven—or, even better, to lay a trap for the murderer using a wereraven as bait.

If cornered, Mr. Gaunt may attempt to talk his way out should the PCs seem disposed to such an option, weaving any net of lies that seems plausible or likely under the circumstances; one possible oratorical angle might be to convince the PCs that it is the wereravens who are evil, and that he is really "freeing" the Crawford family by slaying the lycanthropes. Failing that, Mr. Gaunt attacks.

Mr. Gaunt (scarecrow mage): AL NE; AC 8; MV 9; W9; hp 27; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4 or by spell or weapon; SA hit victim must save vs. death magic or be cursed; SD nonmagical weapons hit for only 1 hp damage, half damage from electricity-based attacks and nonfiery magical weapons, immune to *cold, charm, sleep, hold,* and mind-based attacks or spells; SZ M; ML 17; XP 7,000; S 13, D 16, C 15, I 17, W 15, Ch 1 (to non-evil beings), 16 (to evil beings); ML 18; *brooch of misdirection* (as per the 2nd-level wizard spell, but it operates continuously), *potion of extra-healing, wand of magic missiles* (nine charges), *dagger +2; RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendices I&II*/46 (modified).

Spells: *protection from good, shield, sleep, spider climb; darkness 15' radius, web* (×2); *blink, lightning bolt, vampiric touch; minor globe of invulnerability, polymorph self; summon shadow.*

Fire-based attacks against Mr. Gaunt gain a +1 bonus to the attack roll and a +1 damage bonus per die, and magical weapons employing fire hit for full damage in addition to this bonus. As a scarecrow, Mr. Gaunt is not undead and is unaffected by turning or similar anti-undead spells. Anyone struck by Mr. Gaunt who fails his saving throw vs. poison is inflicted with a horrible odor that attracts insects; the victim suffers 1d4 hp damage from insect bites and –1 on all attack rolls on the round following the blow, 2d4 hp damage and –2 on the next round, 3d4 hp damage and –3 on the next, and so forth. This magical odor can only be erased by a *remove curse* spell.

In combat, Mr. Gaunt's strategy is to raise his defensive spells first, then cast *summon shadow* before engaging in melee. He also shouts for the bar-lgura in area **13** if it hasn't already been destroyed; the bar-lgura fights until its morale breaks, whereupon it flees via *teleportation* to the woods outside the castle, never to return. If he's still *polymorphed* as Bran, Mr. Gaunt breaks the spell once he receives his first wound, thereby regaining 1–12 hp (see *PHB*, pages 161–162). His true appearance is of a grim, 7'-tall scarecrow dressed in tattered robes, capped by a maniacally-grinning jack-o'-lantern. Should things

Bran's Practical Jokes

The real Bran Crawford has long pestered the other members of the Crawford household with his harmless practical jokes—spilling buckets of water on heads, dangling pretend-spiders in faces—but disguised as Bran, Mr. Gaunt has taken the boy's tricks to a whole new level. The following is a list of boobytraps used by Mr. Gaunt in an effort to thin the ranks of the investigating PCs. Each trap may be placed in any area or room that has been unoccupied for a short amount of time (including the characters' quarters!), and each is used only once. All of the traps are made from supplies found within the castle armory and the storehouse.

If asked about the traps, other members of Crawford Manor inform the PCs that they are a common staple around the estate—questions or complaints about the lethality of the traps are met with scorn and disbelief.

Roll 1d6

1. Caltrops: Each caltrop (2–20 total) causes 1 hp damage to any PC stepping on one.

2. Crossbow Trap: Using a length of twine connecting a doorknob, a heavy weight, and the trigger of a mounted crossbow taken from the castle armory, this trap fires a quarrel for 1–4 hp damage at the PC who opens a door (THAC0 14).

3. Dagger Trap: A weighted dagger balanced between the top of a door and the frame falls upon the PC who opens the door, causing 1–2 hp damage (THAC0 18).

4. Gas Trap: A vial containing Mr. Gaunt's home-brewed sleep gas is precariously balanced atop a doorsill; opening the door causes the vial to fall to the floor and shatter, causing the same effects as a *sleep* spell cast at 9th level.

5. Marbles: Placed at the head of a set of stairs, the victims of this simple trap must make a successful Dexterity check or tumble to the foot of the stairs, suffering exactly half the appropriate falling damage (fractions rounded down).

6. Oil Trap: By far the nastiest, this trap consists of a tripwire connected through a series of eyehooks to an oil-filled bucket suspended overhead; a small wooden bowl containing smoldering embers floats upon the surface of the liquid. Tripping the wire causes the bucket to tip over and dump its contents on the victim while simultaneously igniting. The oil burns for two rounds, causing 2–12 hp damage the first round and 1–6 hp during the second.

go badly, Mr. Gaunt casts *polymorph self* to become a swift-flying bird or a darting rat in an attempt to escape.

In addition to the spells that he has memorized, Mr. Gaunt's spellbook contains the spells *locate object, polymorph other,* and *dominate.* Hugo's little song and the presence of the *locate object* spell, which is blocked by lead, should give PCs a strong clue as to the whereabouts of Mr. Gaunt's missing amulet.

After five rounds, Sir Inghram and Griswell rush into the room and join the fray. (Their statistics are found in the beginning of the adventure.)

If Mr. Gaunt is reduced to 0 hp, read or paraphrase the following:

> Suddenly the evil scarecrow stops and screams. Behind, above, and around you, the air is filled with the wind of monstrous wings. A door shatters, sending sparks of wood raining down upon you; windows explode and hail glass in all directions. In a flurry, five titanic ravens—their cawing loud enough to shake mountains—descend upon the stick-and-straw sorcerer. His hysterical cries are drowned out behind a curtain of black feathers; with a horrible snap, they are cut short. The ravens continue to rip at what remains of the scarecrow. Then, staring flatly at you, the unkindness takes to the air, circles once about the room, and is gone.

Sign of Parting

Once the dust has settled, Inghram is very grateful to the PCs for having uncovered the murderer, as well as having played an instrumental part in his destruction. They are healed with Griswell's care, Breanda's home cooking, and plentiful draughts of Inghram's favorite amontillado, and are allowed to stay at the manor until they have recuperated enough to return to the road. At that point, Inghram presents the PCs with their reward: each PC has the choice of three rubies from the castle treasury (area **16**), or a choice of one of the seven magic items. Neither Inghram nor Griswell knows the exact nature of any of the items (or at least they won't reveal it), but they do know that each is enchanted.

The DM should give each PC a story award of 1,000 XP for ending the murders (half that if Mr. Gaunt escaped). If the PCs managed to learn the true identities of the wereravens, Waldron presents each with a black plume as a token of thankfulness. The owner of each wereraven feather receives a favorable response (+1 modifier to reaction rolls) from all other wereravens and becomes immune to attacks from crows and ravens (even evil ones). The plumes are nontransferable, losing their powers if given away, lost, or stolen.

Meanwhile, members of the Crawford household remark that the personality of the bratty Bran, having recovered from his ordeal, seems to have undergone a definite change for the better.

The people and places of "The Unkindness of Ravens" do not necessarily have to disappear from the campaign once Mr. Gaunt is slain. DMs may wish to use Crawford Manor as a regular stopover for traveling PCs. The caverns beneath the manor can easily be expanded; a tunnel or an underwater passage could be added to allow access to the Underdark. The whole scenario could also provide a gateway to the PLANESCAPE® setting simply by changing the much-sought-after *amulet +4* into an *amulet of the planes*—perhaps Mr. Gaunt and the bar-lgura were faction-members or the agents of some dark force.

Or perhaps the PCs have had enough of ravens for awhile, and they may very well wish to return to Crawford Manor—nevermore. Ω

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The mouther attacks the nearest PC immediately. During the attack, the will o'wisp invisibly watches the ensuing battle, taking care not to be noticed.

Gibbering Mouther: INT semi-; AL N; AC 1; MV 3; HD 4+3; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 6+; Dmg 1 (×6) plus special; SA gibbering, bite, spit; SD ground control; SZ M (6'); ML 10; XP 975; *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual Volume One*.

5. The Beginning and the End. Read the following paragraph to the PC of the DM's choice or to the character that reduces the gibbering mouther to 0 hp or below.

> As you strike the horror that assaults you, a sudden burst of emotion, sound, and thought pierces your senses. The cavern wavers in your eyes as the memories of the mouther replace your own. You see a grassy hill outside of Aberdale. A slightly overweight man with a gentle face stands calmly waiting. He turns casually toward the sound of footsteps as a tall figure dressed in black robes approaches. The newcomer is gaunt and harsh featured, covered from neck to ankle in black satin robes heavily decorated with symbols of psionic power. The gentle man smiles warmly at the newcomer. Unexpectedly, the gaunt man's eyes narrow fixedly and aims a mental arrow at the gentle man's mind.
>
> You watch helplessly as the two battle. Even as the gaunt man batters the gentle man with mental blows, he inches closer physically as well. Pain, anger, and desperation line the faces of both opponents. Slowly, the close combat and mental dueling meld the two of them into one amoebic mass. Unable to separate, they broadcast excruciating pain across the countryside, withering the vegetation and terrifying the wildlife.
>
> A third awareness clamps onto the emotions being broadcast and feeds on the pain and anguish. This third mind seems uninhibited by physical form, and it bathes in ecstasy amid the mental torture. The ball of light which is the third mind attracts the amoebic mass of suffering and leads it to a cavern. The newly created abomination grinds and gnaws the floor and walls, but they resist its anguished manipulations, drawing the creature deeper into the earth. Time passes.
>
> Every so often, the bright entity brings another victim to join the chaotic mass and then feasts on the confusion that follows. In this manner, the amoebic monster swells in size and insanity.
>
> A break occurs as you see yourself enter the chamber. The mass of tortured minds strikes back at your intrusion. With the final battle, rest comes at last to the monster. Its hold on your mind relaxes and you return to the present as the cavern reforms into solidity. With a shudder, you collapse.

Concluding the Adventure

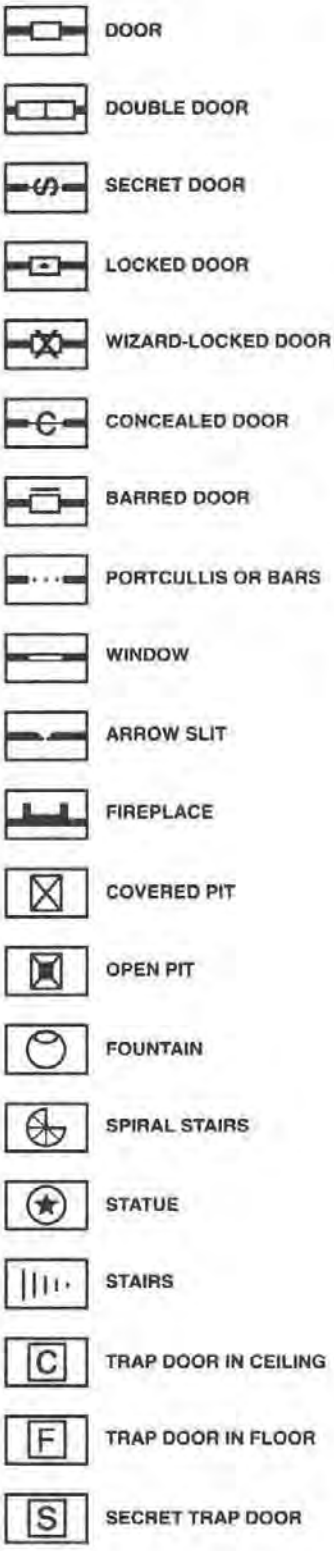
If the DM desires, the PC who has experienced the birth, growth, and death of the gibbering mouther receives the reward of a wild psionic talent. Recommended talents are chemical stimulation, send thoughts, sight link, sound link, cause decay, or double pain. (See *The Complete Psionics Handbook* for details.) The secretions of the mouther have dissolved the stone in this area, leaving gems scattered about the chamber. There are 10 pieces of smoky quartz (each valued at 15 gp, uncut) and four pieces of amethyst (each valued at 35 gp, uncut).

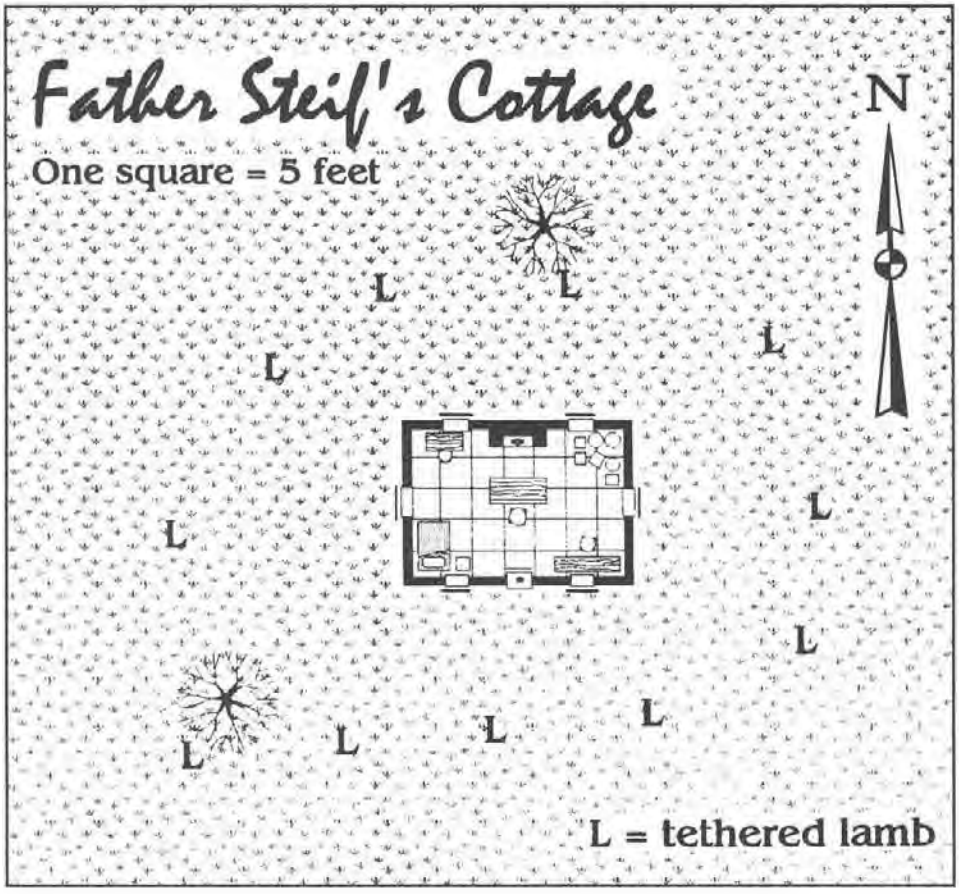
The will o'wisp flees the area, but the character who experienced the birth of the gibbering mouther has a telepathic link with the will o'wisp and can always recognize when it is nearby. The DM may wish to continue the PCs' adventures with the will o'wisp. After the battle, the wisp escapes to find a pair of psionicists with which to create another gibbering mouther. The party's next goal could be to stop the wisp.

Alternatively, the link may also make the wisp aware when the PC is around. The wisp may be tormented by this link and plot the destruction of the PC in order to destroy their bond. The wisp could hire monsters (possibilities include orcs, lycanthropes, a troll, or lizard men) to ambush the PC. A series of attacks heralded by the activation of the link between the PC and the wisp should lead the PCs to realize that the wisp is behind the ambushes. Ω

MAP SYMBOLS

These symbols are used on most maps in DUNGEON® Adventures.





THE BEAST WITHIN

BY PAUL HAMILTON BEATTIE, JR.

Lambs to the slaughter

Artwork by George Vrbanic
Cartography by Chris Perkins

Paul recently began writing a book about a swashbuckling dwarf. He describes it as "great fun, and a welcome respite from the practice of law."

"The Beast Within" is a short AD&D® adventure for 3-6 characters of 1st-3rd level (about 10 total levels). Although the adventure is suitable for characters of any class, race, or alignment, it is better suited for good-aligned PCs. The adventure is also more interesting if the party is not so powerful or so well-provisioned with magic items that it can kill the main antagonist outright. Although the adventure is set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, it can be readily adapted to any setting.

Adventure Background

The adventure takes place as the party journeys through a lightly-wooded region, several days from any major city or town. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> After journeying all day through the wilds, you are ready to find a campsite. The autumn sun has slipped below the tree line leaving only a crimson haze on the western horizon. Nightfall is but minutes away. Tonight there promises to be a glorious star-lit sky and a brilliant round moon. Ahead through the woods you glimpse a clearing. You hear the bleating of lambs, and you smell the smoke from a wood fire.
>
> From the edge of the clearing you see a sturdy cottage. Smoke drifts from the chimney, bearing with it the savory smell of roasting meat. Looking more closely, you see the lambs. They are tethered to trees, bushes, or stakes driven into the ground, and they have been deliberately arranged so that a circle of lambs, numbering about a dozen, rings the cottage. So carefully positioned are the lambs that it is impossible to leave or approach the cottage without passing at least one lamb. The lambs bleat loudly, protesting their captivity. The cottage, which is fashioned out of whole logs, appears to be in sound condition, but the

windows have been securely boarded up, and the door has been reinforced with thick wooden planks. Thin rays of candlelight, visible in the deepening darkness, escape through the cracks between the window boards. The lambs bleat plaintively with the fall of night.

For the DM

The rustic cottage is home to a reclusive cleric of Ilmater named Father Steif, who is infected by the magical disease of lycanthropy. Ilmater is the lawful good god of endurance, suffering, patience, and forbearance in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. (See *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures*, page 21.) DMs running in a different setting should substitute an appropriate god from their own campaign.

About a year ago, Father Steif made a pilgrimage through the wilds of Cormyr and the Western Heartlands. One night, as the pilgrims camped by the road in the Hullack Forest, a marauding werewolf attacked the camp, severely wounding Father Steif. For days Father Steif remained in a fevered state of unconsciousness—hovering on death's doorstep. But he eventually recovered. Upon the rising of the next full moon, however, Steif became a werewolf. Unable to control the beast he had become, he attacked his companions, killing and wounding several other pilgrims before fleeing into the woods.

When Father Steif awoke along the muddy bank of a stream, he was dimly aware he had done something terrible. His clothes were tattered. His hands and chest were caked with dried blood. Worst of all, he no longer felt any connection with Ilmater. He understood that some horrible change had come over him. Some ancient curse had eclipsed his reason and rendered him capable of horrid acts.

A pragmatic man would have sought help from learned scholars or the Church of Ilmater. But Steif is an idealist, not a pragmatist. Steif believes that all things happen because Ilmater wills them so. "If Ilmater has decreed that I must suffer this horrible curse, then it must be for a reason. This suffering—this privation—is surely evidence of Ilmater's loving attempt to purify my soul and bring me closer to my faith."

Vowing to defeat the beast within him by renewed dedication to his faith, Father Steif became a hermit, dwelling in the woods far from civilization. With his own hands he built a cottage—one he hoped would be strong enough to contain the beast when the moon was full. But that was more than twelve full moons ago, and despite his precautions he generally awakens far from his cottage, only to learn upon his return that the beast escaped by crashing through a window or smashing open the door. He has added solid oak crossbars to the door and thick boards to the windows, but to no avail. This time, as the full moon approached, Father Steif carefully tethered lambs in a ring around his cottage in the hopes that the beast will sate his hunger on the animals, thereby posing less of a danger to persons travelling through the surrounding woods.

Encountering the Werewolf

The PCs basically have three options: they can leave, stand at the edge of the clearing and observe, or approach the cottage. If the PCs leave, they are still likely to encounter the werewolf unless they travel fast. Because of the beast's acute senses, he is 60% likely to smell and pursue the PCs. If the werewolf does pursue the PCs, he is likely to catch them in the woods, unless they are capable of rapid (base move 15") and sustained overland movement. If the PCs do not encounter the werewolf, they might still hear his howls echoing through the lonely woods that night.

If the PCs remain at the edge of the clearing to observe the cottage, they soon hear agonizing groans lasting about a round. This is followed by savage snarls and a deep-throated, eerie howl. The lambs bleat in terror and tug desperately at their tethers. A few (1d4) pull free and flee into the woods.

The werewolf will throw himself at the reinforced door to escape his cottage prison. As the beast has an effective strength of 19 (see *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, page 131), he has a 50% chance of smashing open the door each round.

He then leaps from the cabin, landing on the ground outside. If the PCs hide, the werewolf is only 70% likely to smell them. If he smells them, he sniffs along the ground in the party's direction and attacks the PCs. If he does not smell them, he pauses long enough to slaughter 1d4 lambs before disappearing into the woods. Father Steif's hope that the beast would satisfy himself on lamb's meat proves to be vain: murderous rage, not hunger, drives the monster.

If the PCs approach the cabin, they have only 1-4 rounds before Steif transforms into the werewolf. If they call out to him before he transforms, father Steif yells to them, "Get out of here. Flee at once. By Ilmater's tears, you are all in mortal danger." He then collapses on the floor as the pain of the approaching transformation overcomes him. If the PCs peer through cracks in the boarded-up windows, they can barely glimpse the hairy, naked form of Steif in the agonizing throes of transformation. If the PCs have approached the cabin, the werewolf is certain to smell them—even if they flee. He will pursue them when he escapes the cabin.

The Werewolf Attacks

Although savage, the werewolf is wary of people. Thus, if the werewolf is confronted by three or more opponents, he will attack for only 1-4 rounds before fleeing into the woods. The worst thing the PCs can do is to scatter into the woods, in which case the werewolf will hunt them down individually and with great relish until dawn. If any PC is wearing robes or a monk's habit, the werewolf attacks that character preferentially—out of instinctive loathing for his earlier worldly associations. If, despite his immunities, the werewolf is actually injured, he will either flee into the woods (50%) or attack the person who injured him (50%) (or another person if the assailant is not apparent) for 2-5 rounds before fleeing into the woods.

Werewolf (Father Steif): INT 9; AL CE; AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+3; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (bite); SA surprise; SD only hit by silver or magic weapons; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 420; *MM*/240. The werewolf takes the hybrid human-wolf form. As Steif is an infected werewolf rather than a true werewolf, his bite cannot infect others. Recall that the werewolf will transform into Father Steif should he be killed.

Encountering Father Steif

If the PCs survive their encounter with the werewolf, they may return to the cottage during the day (or during a night when the moon is not full—or nearly so) to discover who lives there. If the werewolf also survived, the PCs may meet Father Steif in his normal persona. If the PCs return the morning after encountering the werewolf, Steif is unlikely to be at home. He has awakened miles from home, naked and caked with dried blood and mud. It will take him much of the day to return to his cottage, and he still has two more cursed nights ahead of him this month. (recall that a lycanthrope transforms on the night of a full moon, and the nights immediately preceding and following a full moon.)

Father Steif generally avoids contact with strangers. Although a friendly man by nature, his affliction has made him feel guilty and outcast. He has also become increasingly hostile and paranoid, as the infection gradually increases its hold upon him. He now believes himself to be unfit for human company. Steif's appearance reflects his view of himself as an outcast and a hermit. (See below for description.)

If Father Steif is outside when strangers approach, he will take refuge in his cabin. If he has had time to repair the door, he will shut the door behind him. He will not answer the door unless the PCs hail him or knock repeatedly. If the PCs are persistent, Steif will eventually yell through the door, asking them what they want. In this manner, it is possible to strike up a conversation with Father Steif. If Father Steif has not had time to repair the door, he will retreat to the shadows of a corner in his cottage. He will hail the PCs as they approach, asking their business.

Steif will not volunteer much information about himself, unless the PCs inquire about his lycanthropy without appearing to be hostile. In that case, he will bear his soul—telling his story and explaining his belief that, in time, "faith will cure the malady." Eventually, Steif may trust the PCs enough to invite them to share with him a simple hermit's meal of sliced tomatoes, dried fish, hard bread, roasted meat, and tea made from boiled pine needles. If this occurs, Steif will welcome the company. He listens intently to everything said, and he asks for news of the outside world, especially religious news.

Because he is stubborn in matters of faith, Steif is unlikely to accept facile solutions to his affliction, especially if they are insensitively proposed. Only if a PC engages in a thoughtful philosophical or theological dialogue to convince Steif that Ilmater must have intended the PCs to assist him, and that—in this regard—the PCs are acting as agents of Ilmater, would Steif ever consent to receiving a remove curse, or to some other such plan. The DM should draw out a PC proposing such solutions by roleplaying Steif's stubborn commitment to his faith. "What kind of a servant of Ilmater would I be, Steif might exclaim, were I to grasp at easy solutions to suffering He has imposed on me? No, Ilmater has chosen to infect me with this disease, so that I might be reborn in suffering and endurance. And I shall not leave this cabin for good until Ilmater's spirit joins me in it." Steif does, however, welcome suggestions concerning how to make his cottage a more secure prison for the beast within.

Naturally, if the PCs disparage Steif's faith, he asks them to leave. Although Steif can be angered, he is not by nature a violent man and will not resort to violence to oust disparagers.

Father Steif, Cleric of Ilmater: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; C2; hp 13; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 11, C 15, I 11, W 15, Ch 13; ML 14; oak staff, plain gray tunic, dirty gray trousers, a length of rope to hold his trousers up, a gray leather skullcap, and a small silver pin bearing the symbol of Ilmater (a pair of hands, crossed at the wrists and lashed together).

Spells: *create water, light, locate animals or plants,* and *sanctuary.* If the werewolf killed anyone during his most recent rampage, Steif loses his clerical

powers for a time. Because Steif is living a life of suffering, isolation, and devotion to Ilmater, however, his clerical powers will be restored in 2-12 days. For more information about the worship of Ilmater, or to run Steif as a specialty priest of Ilmater, see *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures*, page 21.

Weapon proficiencies: staff, footman's mace, scourge.

Nonweapon proficiencies: agriculture (11), carpentry (14), musical instrument (songhorn, a type of recorder) (10), reading/writing (common) (12), and religion (15).

Steif is 5'10" tall, with a thin, wiry build. He is forty-three years old, but he appears to be well past fifty. A life of suffering has taken its toll. His face is covered with worry lines, and his brow is perpetually furrowed from years of concentration, deep thought, and fervent prayer. He has an unruly brown beard shot through with gray, and a wild moustache, which he nervously tugs and pulls. His hygiene is abysmal. His clothing is dirty, his hair is completely unkempt, and his finger nails are long and dirty. Steif is emaciated and plainly undernourished, a state that satisfies him perfectly.

The Cottage

The interior of the cottage is furnished with simple but sturdy oak furniture, most of which Father Steif made with his own hands. The floor is covered with hardwood planks, fitted neatly together. In the center of the north wall is a brick fireplace. Old copper pots, various cooking utensils, and a tinder box containing flint and steel are positioned around the hearth. A side of roasted mutton, skewered on a spit, is located inside the mouth of the fireplace to cook. Above the fireplace, on the mantle, rests a footman's mace. Although the mace is a magical *footman's mace +1*, it appears to be unremarkable—being both slightly rusty and covered by a layer of undisturbed dust.

In the southeast corner of the cottage is a long work table and a four legged stool. Various carpenters' tools (worth 10 gp) litter the table. A stout, low-lying bed occupies the southwest corner of the room. A small rectangular rug, fringed with tassels, lies at the foot of the bed. A simple nightstand sits next to the bed, and a battered old chamber pot rests upon the nightstand.

A desk and chair sit in the northwest corner of the room. Two thick white candles in pewter candle holders (worth 1 gp each), a songhorn (recorder) made of cherry wood (worth 5 gp), and a dog-eared book bound in ivory-colored leather lie on the desk. The book is entitled *The Healing Power of Prayer: Curative Rituals of the House of Ilmater.* A bookmark is positioned at the beginning of a chapter entitled "Lycanthropy and Other Magical Diseases and Curses." The book is worth 50 gp. Moreover, if a good-aligned priest reads the book carefully over the course of two weeks, he will gain 10-100 experience points per level of the priest. The desk has a single drawer containing four pieces of paper, two quills, and a small vial of black ink.

In the center of the room is a long rectangular dining table. Two plates, a set of eating utensils, and a goblet—all made of pewter—lie on the table, as well as a loaf of bread and four tomatoes. A four-legged stool sits next to the table. Various provisions are stacked in the northeast corner of the room, including sacks of flower, rice, beans, a tun of cider, several barrels of fresh water, a barrel of pickles, a barrel of salted fish, a bag of salt, and three barrels of brown Sembian ale. The total value of the provisions is 45 gp.

Concluding the Adventure

If the party does not slay the werewolf outright, this adventure offers good roleplaying opportunities. The PCs may befriend Father Steif, perhaps even helping him to find a cure for his affliction. Herbs and medicines alone are insufficient. A *remove curse* spell may work, but only when cast on the night of a new moon, and only if Father Steif is properly annointed (i.e. splashed or immersed in holy water). A PC priest who reads Father Steif's tome can make an Intelligence check; success indicates that the PC has uncovered a possible curative ritual by studying the various chapters and footnotes. PCs unable to help Father Steif directly may consult with local sages; magical talismans capable of curing lycanthropy are believed to exist, and the search for such a talisman could form the basis of an adventure. Such matters are left to the DM's discretion.

At the DM's option, a grateful Father Steif could join the party, provided its members are consistent with his religion and alignment.

If the PCs slay the werewolf, their treatment of Father Steif's corpse could be revealing. The adventure is loaded with clues to Steif's alignment: he is plainly a religious man and an unwilling victim of his disease. If the PCs mistreat or ignore the corpse, or steal Father Steif's possessions, they are behaving in a callous and evil manner. The fact that a person is afflicted with lycanthropy does not give adventurers a license to commit larceny. The PCs should take heed: lawful regimes like Cormyr and Waterdeep have been known to prosecute persons for crimes committed outside their jurisdictions.

If the PCs kill Father Steif during a later visit to the cottage, they have committed murder. They have also killed a servant of Ilmater who was engaged in a sort of religious experiment to cure lycanthropy through prayer alone. Ilmater will curse them severely: for thirty days each PC will suffer double the pain, agony, and suffering (i.e., double the damage) from each wound inflicted upon him. The DM can think of other appropriate sanctions. Ω

DUNGEON® Adventures #66
Cover by Stephen Daniele

"Operation Manta Ray" by Paul Culotta. AD&D® adventure, levels 6–9.

"Enormously Inconvenient" by Kent Ertman. AD&D adventure, levels 2–3.

"The Sunken Shadow" by James Wyatt. AD&D adventure, levels 1–3.

"The Petrifying Priestess" by Brian Corvello. AD&D adventure, levels 5–7.

"Orange and Black" by Peter C. Spahn. AD&D adventure, levels 1–3.

Minimal Alterations

May I say that I am very glad to see that your old style of contents page has been retired. It was somewhat annoying and not easy to scan.

It seems that everyone has a different view on the subject of campaign specific adventures. Well here is mine. To give you a base for my point of view, my main worlds are the MYSTARA, RAVENLOFT, and FORGOTTEN REALMS settings. I also use the BIRTHRIGHT and AL-QADIM® settings. I personally see MYSTARA, FORGOTTEN REALMS, GREYHAWK®, DRAGONLANCE® and RAVENLOFT adventures as all fairly easy to convert to each other or to similar "standard" worlds. I include RAVENLOFT adventures here not through personal bias but because they do not have any real transfer difficulties. Fear and horror checks, as well as restricted knowledge about alignments, can all be ignored, for the most part, in other worlds. The other RAVENLOFT campaign rules are not complex and should be easy to overcome. "Felkovic's Cat" from issue #50 and "Laughing Man" from issue #52 are examples of modules that can be used with only minimal alteration. On the flip side, "Caveat Emptor" from issue #58 is almost begging to be converted into a RAVENLOFT adventure! ("The Baron's Eyrie" of the same issue yet again demonstrates the ease of converting RAVENLOFT adventures).

The BIRTHRIGHT setting is really not convertible apart from adventures that ignore regents and their power struggle; however, "Seeking Bloodsilver," issue #59, was successful. AL-QADIM, Dark Continent, and Celtic adventures are difficult to fit unless your world's geography allows them.

The PLANESCAPE setting is a totally different matter. Without the sort of knowledge that can only, presumably, be found in the campaign setting pack, PLANESCAPE modules can really be used only by extracting the core nugget of the plot, and some of the locations, this may or may not work. I found both recent PLANESCAPE adventures, "Umbra" and "Nemesis" from issues #55 and #60, basically unusable. The DARK SUN® setting has similar problems—its whole magic system is different, and many people do not use psionics. Thus, both of these last two settings are really of major use to only those people who play these worlds. Although I basically agree with Joe Bickley's sentiments in issue #58, I did not like "Spirits of the Tempest" in issue #52, and I do not think that converting Shakespearean plays to AD&D format works well. One thing that I do not see enough of is human villains; this is one reason why I liked "The Murder of Maury Miller" so much. Both of my budding plot ideas are based on human villains. I have nothing against monster villains—mindflayers, dragons, and the Night Parade provide wonderful enemies—but there is something about human, or ex-human (i.e., ghosts, lycanthropes, vampires, and others) villains that inspire a little more emotion in PCs; maybe it's the "but for the grace ..."element.

S.D. Moody
Oxfordshire
England

New World Order

The thing I like best about your magazine is the maps. I am creating a new world, and so far the only adventures in it are ones from your magazine. I should have called it Dungeonland instead of New Pangea. Anyway, I have really populated my world with all the little towns. I have only one request. When you show the map of a city, town, or village, please do not use the buildings that are blacked in. It makes it so much easier to fill in empty buildings or convert them when you can write a number inside the building. Currently I have about 28 adventures in my new world, all from this magazine. Any town the party comes across will be from your pages.

The map in issue #58 (Rocky Harbor) shows blackened-in buildings. This would be an awesome city if it weren't this way, at least for me. My players find it amazing that I can take all those different scenarios and link them together. I sometimes wonder how I do this myself. Anyway, keep up the good work.

Chris Lunden
Upland, CA

Bippity Boppity Boo

The first thing I noticed about *DUNGEON Adventures* issue #62 was "The Rat Trap" written and drawn by Timothy Ide. I think that's great! For Timothy to do both lets the reader know exactly how he envisioned Carn Perrin, Greyblade, and the rest of the "friendly fellows." I don't know how far the editors go to make sure both artist and writer are on the same wavelength, but I can imagine the feeling if a writer's "winged warrior," which he imagined as some rugged hero with 16'-wide bat wings and a two-handed sword, is illustrated as a pixie-winged, epee-wielding bravo. A picture tells a thousand words, and an artist/writer can guarantee those words are his own.

I was also wondering why no stats for either the Utukku of Cyrano were included in the text for "Esmerelda's Bodyguard." It kind of confused the player I was trying to show how to DM.

Furthermore, while all of the modules were well-written and useful, I would have liked one medium length (8–10 pages) module. My players like to finish a module the same night, and if we're not home by midnight our wives turn us into pumpkins.

Sean McIlwane
Vancouver, BC
Canada

At the time that "Esmerelda's Bodyguard" was published, information on the Utukku and the Clockwork Swordsman was unavailable. Because these are two new creatures, we decided to print MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® pages for them at the end of the adventure.

Sick as a Dog

I would like to begin by saying I think your magazine is great and full of useful adventures, but some changes have prompted me to write this letter.

The new table of contents page format is very silly and hard to read, please return it to its earlier and simpler format. If you want to have more art in *DUNGEON Adventures*, add more to the adventures, where it could be more helpful.

I also think the proposed idea of a "favorite adventure" poll is bad. I really like your magazine because it is packed with good, usable material. Please don't change that.

I hope you are not listening to Willie Walsh (from issue #58) about cover art or adventure descriptions. An adventure description isn't much good if it can't tell about the adventure. If his players want to read the magazine descriptions, they must not be that concerned about being surprised.

Lastly, I would like to relate a problem I experienced with the adventure "Janx's Jinx" in issue #56. The problem was how, exactly, do sick wolves attack a town? Do they run through the streets and attack anything they can eat? Do they attack stables or houses? It seemed to me that the townsfolk just had to stay in their houses when they heard the howling pack approaching. Also, a battle plan or something would have helped to get a better picture of the fight. Do the farmers just stand in the street and fight the wolves? My players had everyone stay indoors while the elven archers (in the bell tower) picked off all the dogs. I was just curious how the adventure was supposed to occur.

That's all the problems I have accumulated over the years, so keep up the good work!

Matt Jacobsen
St. Paul, MN

The adventure states that the wolves are weak but more aggressive than normal. My guess is that some of the daring townsfolk went outside to protect their animals and their homes.

D&D® Adventures?

I thoroughly enjoy your magazine. There is, however, a problem. I noticed that all of the adventures in *DUNGEON Adventures* are AD&D.

I am a DM for a small group that plays the original D&D game and would really like to see a few regular D&D adventures in your magazine. If so, I would be happy to write in or playtest any D&D adventures.

Dale Korinek
Bolingbrook, IL

The Bearded Elf

Even though my friends and I are more prone to make up an adventure to better fit our characters, we still enjoy the occasional written ones now and then. Now, I have two things to say. One, I'd like to see more Underdark adventures; I've always liked the svirfneblins, and the two subterranean dwarf races should be used more.

And two, in issue #58, the SideTrek poses a question. The first picture, done by David Day shows the elven boy, Mikiril, and who I assume is his father. Here's the question: Is the father a true elf? (I've learned that moonblades are usually earned by true elf nobles.)

The reason I ask this is because Partrinian, if that's him, has a full beard and appears more like a dwarf.

Well, there's my question. I'm sure there's a reason for the bearded elf.

Sam Doebert
via email

Belwynn the dwarven sage hypothesizes that Partrinian was one of those extremely rare elves blessed with a full beard. "Quite becoming," remarked the old sage.

Thwarted!

Well, I am officially a subscriber to *DUNGEON Adventures*. Although I have been a loyal reader for over two years, I have consistently purchased my issues (#50–62) through retailers. However, due to the difficulty in locating your magazine lately, and considering the increase in price over the years, it seemed the appropriate thing to do.

I am both a player and DM, not to mention a contributor of proposals and SideTrek adventures, and I enjoy reading you magazine immensely. Because of my interest in things horrible and macabre, I find that the RAVENLOFT setting suits me quite nicely, and I commend Paul Culotta, Jason Kuhl, Dan De Fazio, Christina A. Stiles, and Lisa Smedman for their creative endeavors.

I own the *Masque of the Red Death* setting, "The Gothic Earth Gazetter," and "A Guide to Transylvania." I was very impressed with the combining of actual events and people of the 1890s with the trademark Gothic horror that makes the RAVENLOFT setting so intriguing. Though it closely resembles *Call of Cthulhu®*, a role-playing game based on the writings of H.P. Lovecraft—one of my favorite authors (next to Clive Barker)—the idea of a darker, parallel history to our own established within *Masque of the Red Death* was masterful. When "Jigsaw" appeared in issue #61, I was delighted to have another adventure to add to my collection!

In issue #61, I was moved by David Bartel's letter regarding "DMing in Timbuktu." I am also without players, for my old gaming group lives in San Diego, and my two friends, who shall remain anonymous, and whom I have tried to insidiously coerce into playing, have thwarted my every attempt! I sympathize with your dilemma! Peace.

Jason Duke
Phoenix, AZ

D&D Flashback

I am currently re-reading *DUNGEON* Issue #54 and "Redcap's Rampage" for the fourth time. In the author's bio, it says that "Redcap's Rampage" is Chris Perkins' third offering in a trilogy of D&D scenarios. I am very curious as to the previous two scenarios. I would be delighted to read the other two adventures. Thanks for producing such an excellent magazine.

Aaron Durda
Canutillo, TX

The other adventures in question are "Them Apples" (Issue #48) and "Elexa's Endeavor" (Issue #53). The modules have unrelated storylines, but they're designed to fit easily into any generic D&D campaign world. Thanks, by the way.—Ed.

The Easy Life

Wow! Issue #62 was just terrific! I'm running a campaign out of Daggerford in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, and my players started to move into the winter months. I hit them with "Blood on the Plow" as they were returning to the city, then had them encounter "The Ghost at Widder Smithers" as the first real snow fell. During the winter, a late season merchant entered the city, only to have his wagon topple over on ice and set free small, pesky beasties ("Wild in the Streets")! And finally, after having the players spend some time training and researching spells during the late winter, I ran "Esmerelda's Bodyguard" to bring them into springtime. They loved it all, and I had a blast running it! You have to thank Lance Hawvermale, John Baichtal, Jason Peck, and Paul Culotta for a great job in making my life as a DM easier. You can bet I'll keep picking up *DUNGEON Adventures* in the future. Again, fantastic issue!

Todd White
via email

Bodacious

First of all, I would like to say that your magazine is most excellent. Since issue #50, I have been reading this magazine loyally. I think it is a cheap and easy way for a DM to get adventures quickly when he needs them most, even when he does not have much money. I am not a rich guy, and I would appreciate it if you do not raise the magazine price as you did with *DRAGON® Magazine*.

I DM a FORGOTTEN REALMS and RAVENLOFT campaign, and I would like to see more FORGOTTEN REALMS adventures within these pages. Only 3% (rounded down) of the adventures written in the past twelve issues (#49–60) are set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. "Steelheart," by Paul Culotta, and "Welcome to Krypthome," by Samuel Heath, are both wonderful adventures, but the only adventures set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS in 12 issues. Some other neglected campaign settings are the GREYHAWK®, DRAGONLANCE, and BIRTHRIGHT settings.

I also want to say that the artwork, interior and cover, seem to be getting better every issue. Some of the exceptional cover artists (my opinion), in recent issues, are as follows: Robh Ruppel (issues #50 and #57), Tony Szczudlo (#59), Paul Jaquays (#49), and Tony DiTerlizzi (#55 and #61). I would like to see more of their work in this magazine in the future. They make the magazine more attractive and pleasing to the eye.

Finally, I am wondering if this magazine will accept DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE adventures, since they do not use regular AD&D rules. I am anxious to write a DRAGONLANCE adventure that uses the SAGA™ rules system. If SAGA rules are allowed then, what would the format be for the statistics of monsters and characters?

Jason Alvesteffer
Marlton, NJ

Our latest FORGOTTEN REALMS offering is Paul Beattie's "The Beast Within"—perfect for a single evening's play. Check out "The Ice Tyrant" on page 26 for an example of how we print FIFTH AGE adventures. If you have a proposal idea, send it in. You can request a copy of our writer's guidelines by sending an SASE to the adjacent address, c/o Writer's Guidelines.

Waste of Paper—Not!

First of all, I want to say that I enjoy *DUNGEON Adventures* very much. All of the adventures within it are great, imaginative, and most of all, fun.

Now I have something to get off my chest. My only problem is directed at some of the letters published in *DUNGEON Adventures* I feel I have held my peace long enough.

Some of these letters are from people who have difficulty converting published adventures to fit their own campaign worlds. I have read many letters in *DUNGEON Adventures*, written by people who sentence a good adventure with the phrase "a waste of 20 pages." The most recent occurrence is in issue #62, where Mr. Edward Albert sentenced "Jigsaw" (issue #61) to that fate.

I know everyone is entitled to his own opinions, no matter how shallow some of those opinions are. I find it very hard to believe that an adventure is absolutely useless and a waste.

Also, Mr. Albert termed "Jigsaw" as "unconvertible." How can that be remotely true? I have converted "Jigsaw" to fit my campaign with no problems. The players and myself (DM) had a lot of fun with that particular adventure. Mr. Albert, an adventure is not "a waste of 20 pages" simply because you cannot convert it to fit your campaign world.

I think those people who term adventures as "a waste of 20 pages" (or anything along those lines) should show the readers what they have by submitting their own adventures—unless those people feel that the Standard Disclosure Form is a waste of paper.

Jeff Cumberland
Dallas, PA

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